

### iii) Raised to new life.

'We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.' Rom 6:4

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.' Galatians 2:20

'Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.' Galatians 5:25

Jesus doesn't call us to follow him without making it possible for us to do just that!

The power of the Cross is that his death is our death, his resurrection our resurrection and his ascension our ascension.

He's joined our lives with his so that all that's his becomes ours.

So that our old life with all its weakness is dealt with – crucified - and we're now raised to live a new life with him.

This is the power of the Cross. It's what makes it possible for ordinary men, women and children to follow Jesus, to live by the Spirit and to walk by the Spirit.

It's makes it possible for ordinary people like us to be used by God to his glory.

Taking up our Cross daily is to begin a journey of faith with Jesus where we learn to let what he did at the Cross become real in our lives, real for us.

How will you respond?

### Pause for Personal Prayer



Again pause to pray over Gal 2:20, 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.'

### Discuss



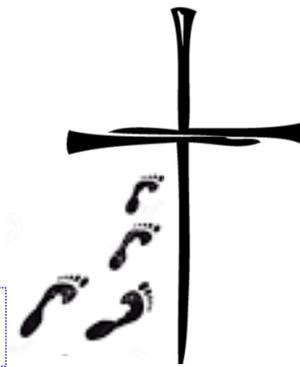
- What does it mean 'but Christ lives in me'?
- What could this mean for you and for how God wants to use your life?

### Taking it Further

Take time to pray over Galatians 2:20 asking God to reveal its truth even more.

# Following Jesus Christ

## Monday to Saturday



## 3: The power of the Cross

Jesus calls us to be his disciples but what makes that possible?

What changed those first ordinary men, women and children into disciples of Jesus who turned their world upside down? What could change us?

The answer lies in the power of the Cross  
– in the effect that Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension had on their lives.

Jesus said: *'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me'*. Luke 9:23

In session 4 & 5 we'll be exploring what it means to 'deny ourselves and take up our Cross daily' but first we pause to prayerfully look at the power of the Cross.

We're asking ourselves, can the same Cross have the same affect on us?

If a small group of disciples denying themselves, taking up their cross daily and following Jesus had such effect 2000 years ago, what could happen today?

What could be the effect on your world; your family and friends, your street, your workplace, community and church? The nation?

### A suggested outline for the session

Open with worship and prayer

Divide your time between the 3 sections

In each of the 3 sections ...

- . Ask someone to read the scripture & reflection
- . Pause for a few minutes of personal prayer
- . Then discuss the questions given
- . At the end allow 10mins for personal prayer

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## i) Absolute forgiveness

'wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.' Psalm 51:7

'We all, like sheep, have gone astray' Isaiah 53:6

'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:8-9

We confess our sins every Sunday (and more often!) but learning to know God's forgiveness for ourselves and for others is a journey.

We all make mistakes but the forgiveness Jesus paid for is absolute forgiveness – to wash us whiter than snow, a 100 degree wash!

Forgiven and washed so white, that it's as though you'd never done it.

As you stand before him he's put your sins as far away from you as the 'east is from the west' Ps 103:12.

You stand holding the 'gift of righteousness' Romans 5:17, 'arrayed in a robe of his righteousness' Isaiah 61:10 – how beautiful you are!

This absolute forgiveness gives us a fresh start, everyday, his mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:23).

The past no longer has any right to hold us back.

We're no longer 'miserable offenders' with our heads hung in shame, we're sons and daughters standing in righteousness before our God.

'Washed whiter than snow'.

### Pause for Personal Prayer



Where are you in your journey of knowing God's forgiveness in your life? Pause to pray with Ps 51:7 'washed whiter than snow'.

### Discuss



- How white is 'whiter than snow'? Look at objects around you. Discuss.
- Is it true that learning to know God's forgiveness is a journey? Discuss.
- What helps or hinders you in believing that God forgives you?

## ii) Crucified with Christ

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.' Gal 2:20

'don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism ...' Rom 6:3,4

'he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities ... and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.' Isaiah 53:5-6

How can St Paul make this incredible claim that; '*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*' Gal 2:20?

Could this be what he saw (see session 2) when he cried; '*Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*' Romans 7:24,25 ?

We don't need to understand how God did it, we just take him at his word and ask him to help us to believe what he did for us at the Cross.

That '*all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death*' Rom 6:3 - God took our old life and baptised us into Jesus' death.

That '*the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*' Isaiah 53:6

That '*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*'

This is what God says happened at the Cross. The past has happened but it doesn't need to hold or define our lives any longer.

Learning to receive and believe this truth takes time, but it's a wonderful journey.

### Pause for Personal Prayer



'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.' Pause to pray with these words.

### Discuss



- Read Gal 2:20. What does it mean to have been crucified with Christ?
- What difference does it or could it make in everyday life?
- What makes sense and what questions do you have?