



**FGA MELBOURNE
MEMBERS NOTES**

June 2014

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THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH – Members Copy

Session 1: Begin Again

Key passage: *“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:9-13 ESV)

A. Scripture Reading (John 1:1-18)

B. Main point

Two kinds of people who need Jesus: Nicodemus (being good) and the Samaritan Woman (God’s grace is good).

In today’s session we meet Nicodemus (John 3) who thinks he’s already saved, but gets asked to begin again. We also meet the Samaritan woman (John 4) who hasn’t “done” the right things, but Jesus shows her extraordinary love. Salvation is for all, but what does it require?

Nicodemus struggles with having to undo all of the things he has done (i.e. He has to crawl back into his mother’s womb and begin again), and the Samaritan woman has to completely change her world. Today, however, there’s a growing number of “Believing, Non-practising Christians”. Statistics state that 64% of Australians say they are Christians (believe Christianity), yet only 9% are actively practising and regularly attending at a place of worship (and that’s only attending church!). There’s the kind of faith that says “Lord, Lord I did these things in your name” (See Matthew 7:21-27) but doesn’t save. And there’s the kind of faith that SAVES.

We look at the tension today between being good and God’s grace is good. Where do you stand?

C. Discussion Questions

1. Is it possible to be at church, have a good understanding of Christianity and the Bible, live a moral life and not be saved? There are all kinds of people in churches today. How do we know who is truly saved?

2. Who can be saved? Does believing in Jesus mean that your whole life has to change? Can a person be saved and still sin and be living in sin?

3. Take some time to work out what you would say to someone if you were going to explain Salvation to them. Maybe it’s to your family, or your friends or colleague.

[there’s no perfect answer, but our attempt to work out what we will say is so crucial for our own faith understanding and for us as we live out the great commission. Over the course of this series, hopefully the answer will become clearer]

D. Application

Write down one question you have about salvation or Christianity. See if you can get this answered through the series or perhaps go and find out about it in the weeks to come.

Question:

E. Looking Forward

In Session 2 we will be looking at the word “Believe” and answer a range of questions that have been brought up in the first Session.

New Visitor/Non-Christian Take Home:

Unfortunately, so many people engage with Christians who call themselves Christians but aren't really much different from anyone else. Christianity is not a set of rules and morals (something Nicodemus was really good at), nor is it a simple belief without any lasting life change. It tackles our very understanding of life itself and the world that we are in. Jesus doesn't want to persuade you to believe in Him and to make Him Lord. His point is that He IS already Lord, and that the world in all its splendour cannot save itself. It is because of His love for us that he wants us to put our trust in Him. That's why John 3:16 is perhaps the most famous verse in the whole Bible:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:16-17 ESV)

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Session 2: Dependence

Key passage: *“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”* (John 20:30-31 ESV)

A. Scripture Reading (John 15:1-12)

B. Main point

We depend on Jesus for Salvation

We ask the question today: “What does it mean to be really dependent on Jesus?”. We know that our own works are never good enough to save us. If we were able to save ourselves, Jesus would never need to come into the world. However, some people view salvation just as a point in time, or a particular action that they take (like going up for an altar call, or saying the sinner’s prayer). Something that gets them through the gates of heaven and saved. For them, dependence on Jesus can be something long forgotten, or something that doesn’t really enter into their daily lives. It’s possible that they aren’t dependent on Jesus anymore, but rather, dependent on the “religious activity” that they did to be saved (e.g. Saying the Sinners Prayer). It’s our vibrant, authentic, real, daily dependence on Jesus that saves us. Not our works, but Jesus’ works. Please take time to work this out in your home group as we explore salvation.

C. Discussion Questions

1. Why is it worthwhile to explain the word “Believe”? What are some of the ways it is misused today?
2. What does it mean to be dependent on Jesus?
3. How do you know if you are truly saved?

D. Application: Make space for Jesus

Work out what you can do in the next two weeks to increase your dependence on Jesus. Write it down as a commitment.

E. Looking Forward

In our next session, we look at how we can practically live out our dependence on Jesus. If today's session seems somewhat theoretical, at our next session we land on something practical that every Christian should look at doing regularly (if not on a daily basis even).

New Visitor/Non-Christian Take Home:

Everyone puts their trust in something. This world offers so many alternatives for you to depend on. You can depend on your skills, your money, your relationships to get the most out of life. Christianity answers the most fundamental of all questions: What is life all about?

If you're exploring Christianity through this series, it might be a good time for you to figure out what it is that you depend on and check to see if dependence on it is truly going to pay off. Is the world (and what it has to offer) enough for you?

John 20:30-31 says "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

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Session 3: Hear and Obey

Key passage: “.... The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” (John 10:3-5 ESV)

A. Scripture Reading (John 10:1-18)

B. Main point

Jesus’ sheep follow Him for they know His voice

So far, we have raised a lot of questions about what it means to be truly saved. Today, we are going to land on how that works out in our everyday lives. We don’t want our faith to be something that we just mentally acknowledge without it being something that translates into an authentic reality in our lives. Even if we re-define the word “Believe” to mean “Dependence”, what does it then mean to be “Dependent on Jesus”?

We land on two questions that would be helpful for all Christians to ask themselves regularly:

1. What is Jesus saying to me? and
2. What am I doing about it?

C. Discussion Questions

1. After all that has been discussed; do you think it is possible to be saved without hearing and obeying Jesus? How would you now answer some of the questions posed earlier e.g. Can a person be saved and still living in sin? Can a person go to church, agree with all the teachings, be a good person and not be saved?

2. How can I tell what Jesus is saying to me?

3. What are some of the obstacles to Obeying Him, and what can we do about getting rid of them?

D. Application: Hear and Obey

Each day this week, set aside time to ask yourself:

1. What is Jesus saying to me? and
2. What am I doing about it?

Maybe you’ll be reading a passage of scripture during your quiet time and you’ll ask these questions.
Maybe you’ll have heard a sermon on a podcast, and you’ll ask these questions.
Maybe you’ll have interacted with someone during the day, and you’ll ask these questions
Maybe you’ll be still and hear the Holy Spirit, and you’ll ask these questions
Maybe you’ll put on some Praise and Worship, or spend time in prayer, and you’ll ask these questions

Make space to Hear and Obey.

E. Looking Forward

Next session we wrap up the series by looking at Jesus on the cross and his ultimate victory. If it's between your way and His way, you need to know that His way is greater.

New Visitor/Non-Christian Take Home:

A call to Christianity involves the whole of your life. It is the call to a different Master. Not one that has evil intentions or one that wants to rob you out of the joy of life. But rather one who can give you full life.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10 ESV)

A little further on, Jesus says, in John 15:11-13: *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full... This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."*

Jesus loves you, and his greatest command is that we show that love to others.

THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH – Members Copy

Session 4: Victory

Key passage: *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33 ESV)

A. Scripture Reading (John 19 & 20)

B. Main point

Taking a risk with Jesus is worthwhile because ultimately He has the victory

We are now wrapping up the whole series. You may have heard it said before, FAITH is often spelt r.i.s.k., because the life of a true follower of Christ is one of risk. If you're dependent on Jesus then who knows where He will lead you, or what He will ask of you. Sometimes, we doubt that God has the very best for us, and so we hold back, preferring to settle with the things of the World. We rest on what others say is the best way, and we bank on things that in reality are temporary.

C. Discussion Questions

1. Read through today's verse again: *"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33 ESV). How does Jesus give us peace? Does salvation promise us a peaceful, easy life?

2. What is the problem with using the following phrases too quickly:

(1) "Accept Christ"

(2) "Ask Jesus into my heart"

(3) "Having a personal relationship with Jesus"

(4) "Making Jesus your personal Lord and Saviour"

3. How should Salvation affect our lives? What next?

D. Application: Rededicate your life to Christ

At the end of this series, if you would like to, consider rededicating your life to Christ. Sometimes couples go through a marriage rededication, to remind themselves that they need to keep their relationship real, vibrant and alive. You could take some time this week, to reaffirm your dependence on Christ.

What would that mean for you?

E. Looking Forward

We trust that you have benefited significantly from the "TWINE" studies. The next Home Group series, "Deeper Faith", will be one where we explore what it is to go deeper with God in our walk with Christ.

New Visitor/Non-Christian Take Home:

This series has primarily been designed for believers or church-goers as they explore the reality of their faith. If you would like to better understand Christianity and what Jesus did on the cross, FGA Melbourne runs an Alpha program designed to take you through the fundamentals of our faith.

Ultimately, we hope that you will realise that the world can only offer so much. There is more to life. More than just having fun, being a good person, making money. Here's a video about it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ThVwkvbSmc0>