

# Simple - Studies in Mark

## Session Four: Believe - Part 2 (including notes for leaders)

Welcome, opening prayer and worship

(5–15 minutes)

**[Pray as you begin, asking God to be at work in your group, and enjoy a short time of worship together (e.g. singing, soaking, waiting on God in silence, praying through a Psalm, journaling, etc.).]**

Introduction

(5 minutes)

**[Read the paragraphs below aloud to introduce the session.]**

The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus came down to earth to solve a problem that He didn't create. In this session we see that He is both 'just' (the judge) because He knows that something must be done about our sin, and 'justifier' (the one who pays) because He is the one who takes our sin away. The power of that good news is available to all who believe.

Bible study

(15 minutes)

**[Read Mark 4:1-11]**

1. Although they were not fully aware of it, the disciples had been given the 'secret of the Kingdom of God'. What is the simple point of this parable?
2. *See answer to question 1.* There are different ways to do this. Name a few.
3. See vs 5. How do we prevent being seeds that fall on rocky places (shallow soil)?

Movie Clip

(15 minutes)

**[Watch the clip from Andy Stanley's talk on the 'Simple' DVD. Go to 'Group Curriculum' -> 'Session 4. -> 'Continue'.]**

Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFoO9lgVAlI>

**[Work through the questions below.]**

1. Was there anything from the DVD that was new to you, or had an effect on you? Did you hear anything that raised more questions in your mind?
2. Think about all the advertisements you get for 'free offers'. Have you ever received anything 'free'? What hidden catches have accompanied the free offers?
3. Read Romans 3:23-24. Does it make sense that the most valuable thing of all, a right standing before God, is available for free, with no strings attached? Why would people turn down this real free gift?
4. Read Romans 3:25. While it was free to us, making us acceptable cost Jesus dearly. He was the sacrifice on our behalf. How do you feel about what Jesus went through for us? What does it tell you about the enormity of this gift?
5. Read Romans 3:26. God is just. Sin had to be taken care of and yet God knew that we were powerless to do anything about it. So through the sacrifice of Jesus, all sin was taken care of, both the sins committed in the past and the sins of the future. How does this impact your understanding of the seriousness of sin and the character of God?
6. Some argue that Christianity is narrow and exclusive. But a right standing before God is available to all who believe. What does this mean for our neighbours, friends and family?
7. Do you believe that Jesus is the unique one and only from God? If you do, what led to this decision? If you do not, what aspect of belief are you wrestling with?

**[Close by reading the following prayer aloud.]**

From Galatians 3:23-25 (CEV). "The Law controlled us and kept us under its power until the time came when we would have faith. In fact, the Law was our teacher. It was supposed to teach us until we had faith and were acceptable to God. But once a person has learned to have faith, there is no more need to have the Law as a teacher."

Father, we thank you that we are not justified through our observance of the Law, but through your free gift of grace. We pray that our eyes may be opened fully to the enormity of that gift for us. We also pray that all our friends and family may come to see the truth; that we are sons and daughters of the Living God. Amen.

**[Ministry idea: When this message captivates the human heart, it impacts our behaviour. Forgiven people find it easier to forgive. Loved people find it easier to love. Accepted people find it easier to accept. Sinners who've been forgiven of sin find it easier to abandon their sin. A tree is recognised by its fruit. Is this fruit visible in your life?]**