

1. Why Christianity is good news, not bad

Discussion guide – Series II



BECAUSE
WE CARE
It's all about the conversation
SERIES II



HOOK:

- Today we're discussing the way Christianity is good news, not bad. Out of interest, has anyone had any good news recently?
- To what extent would you say that coming to faith in Christ was good news for you?
- If you had to summarise the gospel in one word, what word would you choose, and why?
- **Activity:** Write on a white board / screen a list of positive things the Christian faith brings (1) in people's lives, and (2) to entire societies. (Record this to look at again during future discussions).

BOOK:

- When Christians explain this good news to people, sometimes they seem to hear the message as if it were bad news. Why do you think that is?
- **Read John 3:16 and 17.** Is telling people they are sinners separated from God good news?
 - Is this a part of the gospel message, and if so why?*
- **Read Romans 3:22-24.**
 - What does God give us?
 - Through whom is it given?
 - By what is it received?
 - By saying it is received by faith – what is the intended contrast? (It is not received through good works / the law).
 - How many is this gift relevant to?
 - How many could its benefits be available for?

LOOK:

- What is the most important point in the gospel (noting John 3:16 above, or the 4 points from Series 1 – Video 2 used to summarise the gospel message: Creation, Fall, Redemption/Jesus, Restoration)?**
 - What is the most important point to make with a person when trying to explain this message to them? (How about whatever point they don't understand or see reason to believe!)
- Do you think most people in our nation already understand they are separated from friendship with God because of their sin – or does this need explaining to them?
- Are people generally happy to be told the Bible says they are 'sinners who are therefore separated from God and going to hell' – or are they prone to being offended by this? Why might some feel offended?
- How could we help people understand this idea of 'broken relationship due to sin' without somehow making them feel they are being judged by us?
- In John 8:7 Jesus wanted to point out that those accusing a woman of sin were also sinners. But, instead of accusing them, he wisely asked a question that caused them to assess it for themselves ('Whoever is without sin cast the first stone'). What is the difference between these two approaches?

1. Why Christianity is good news, not bad

Page 2



BECAUSE
WE CARE
It's all about the conversation
SERIES II



- **Learning point:** Here are three simple questions that could help a person understand the Christian idea of sin and how it separates us relationally from God:
 1. Do you have standards of behaviour that you expect of yourself?
 2. Do you always live up to your own standards?
 3. If this good and loving God exists, do you think his standards would be higher or lower than yours?

"...And that's all the Bible says. We're all falling short of God's standards for us – and this is a problem for us, because it's a problem to God!"

REVISION

- Is the Christian message really good news to talk about with others, and why?
- What parts of the message are more difficult to communicate, and why?
- Should people feel judged or critiqued when we communicate this message? If not, what are some keys to communicating without judgement?
- What other stories of Christian influence in people's lives and throughout history could we tell, to help people see more clearly how truly positive the results of the Christian faith and message are? (Revise the list you created at the start of today's discussion).

The over-arching point: We do carry good news, and with good people skills everything can still be said! (1 Peter 3:15.)

TOOK:

- What do you take away from this discussion today?
- **Activity:** List 5 non-church friends (if not done at the start of the year already) who you desire to encourage to consider the Christian faith this year, and discuss what you could do next to encourage them on this journey?

PRAY:

- ...for a deeper love for those who do not yet know the hope of Christ.
- ...for wisdom to find ways to open up meaningful conversation.
- ...for the 5 friends who you are praying will consider faith in Christ.
-

* Our sin and separation from God are not the good news, but instead the context within which the good news is understood. For revision: See video #2 in the first series, sometimes titled 'What is the gospel?'. It suggests 4 words that together represent 'the whole gospel message'. (The point of that video is to demonstrate how, by explaining each word concisely, the essence of this message can be explained to someone in just 30 seconds. The four words are Creation, Fall, Jesus/Redemption, Restoration).

** 'Jesus' is likely the most important. His life and offer are the message. This is the good news.