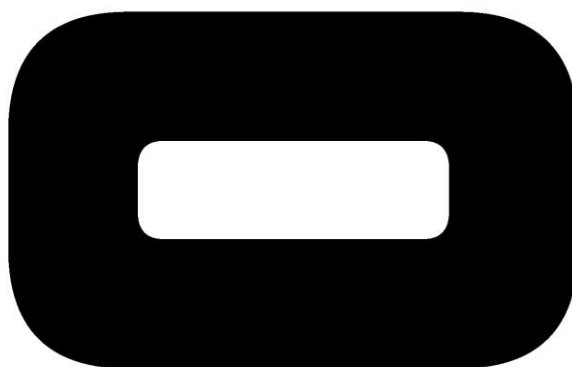
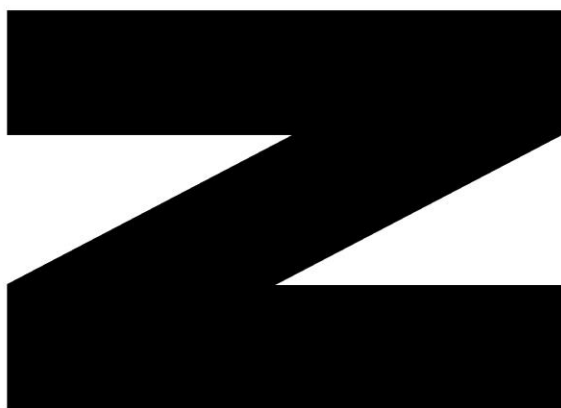


**LIFE
PASSION
SAVIOUR
BOAST
COST
GOAL
BODY
LIFE
STYLE
FUTURE**



Contents

1. One Passion – the Glory of God	page 3
2. One Saviour – Jesus	page 7
3. One Boast – the Cross	page 10
4. One Cost – everything	page 14
5. One Goal - to see others find their joy in God	page 17
6. One Body – to grow to maturity	page 20
7. One Lifestyle – like Christ	page 24
8. One Future – the Glory of God	page 27

Study 1

One Passion – the Glory of God

Introduction

Read Deuteronomy 6.4-5

God makes the claim that he is the one true God. This is quite the claim!

Historically speaking, how have people responded to this claim?

What about the people you know personally? What would they say if this call made to Israel, was made to them?

This is the claim God made and makes. During this series we will investigate living the 'One Life' for this One God, the life we were made to live. Today we look at what drives people, their passions and desires and see that because of the claim God has made and continues to make there is one passion we should all have. Above all other passions, our passion should be for the glory of God.

Discuss:

1. When we say 'passions drive' why do they do this?
2. What do most people's passions drive them toward?
3. How do we identify what is at the centre of a person's life? Asked another way, what points toward peoples true passions in life?

Read the following:

Isaiah 43.6-7; 48.9-11; 49.3; Ezekiel 20.9; 36.22; Psalm 106.7-8; Romans 9.17; 15.8-9; 1 Cor 10.31; 1 Peter 4.11; Philippians 1.11; 2 Thess 1.9-10; John 17.24

As you look at these passages collectively, answer the following:

1. How is God's glory revealed?
2. Why is God's glory so important?

3. What does God appear to be most passionate about?

Read Ephesians 1.4-6 and Luke 2.10-14

Some people feel as though God's love is lessened because he loves us for his own sake; he is passionate about his own glory (you might want to discuss this).

1. How do these verses remind us that God's passion for his own glory is a wonderful thing for us too?

We see throughout the Scripture that God's glory was the passion of many; the Psalmist, Paul and of course, Jesus. They all knew that if *they* were their own passion, they would never be satisfied. But with *God* and *His* glory as their passion they had found the greatest treasure imaginable.

Read Psalm 73.25-26

***"Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever."***

Write this Psalm in your own words.

Having written Psalm 73.25-26 in your own words, is this a true reflection of your affections toward our God?

It is hard to think that we could honestly express ourselves like the Psalmist.
Extending from Psalm 73.25-26,

1. what desires compete?
2. what things do we rely on for strength and assurance?
3. why do these things take the place of God?

Read Phil 1.20-21

Paul, sitting in prison, writing to the church in Philippi, expresses his passion, powerfully and simply.

1. What was his sole passion? When you read of his life and his words, does this surprise you?
2. Have you met or witnessed people who live like Paul?
3. What was unique about them?
4. How did you know their passion was for God and His glory?

Read 1 Corinthians 11.1

Paul encourages his readers to follow his example. When we read Paul's letters it is clear that Paul took his lead from Christ, that all of life was to be lived with the sole passion of praising God for His glory. Now read the proceeding context:

Read 1 Corinthians 10.31-33

Based on 1 Corinthians 10.31-33, in what areas of life should our passion be expressed and for what purposes?

If you don't see the greatness of God then all the things that money can buy become very exciting. If you can't see the sun you will be impressed with a streetlight. If you've never felt thunder and lightning you'll be impressed with fireworks. And if you turn your back on the greatness and majesty of God you'll fall in love with a world of shadows and short-lived pleasures – John Piper

1. Make a list of 'shadows' and 'short-lived pleasures' that people fall in love with, including those you have or do.
2. How do these 'shadows' prevent you from seeing the greatness of God?
3. How can you be sure that you do see his greatness? (You could get practical as a group and make commitments together for the year)

God always intended His people to have a passion for Him and His glory, a passion resulting in praise.

4. If our praise extends from our passion, how do we stoke the fires of our passion for our God's glory?

Prayer

Take time to re-write the 'shema' Deuteronomy 6.4-5 and/or use it as the foundation of your prayer for one another. Ask God that you might turn from the shadows see the greatness and majesty of the one true God that your passion may be for His glory.

Additional – If you have time – ask people to choose a couple of their favourite songs, look at the lyrics and reflect on what they say. Do they keep God's glory at the centre? Why are they favourites for people?

You might want to listen to them or even sing them together and use this as a time of reflection.

Study 2

One Saviour - Jesus

Introduction

In Acts 4:12, the apostle Peter speaking about Jesus said, **‘Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we may be saved.’**

The song, **No Other Name** [Trevor Hodge, EMU Music], highlights this truth that there is only one Saviour Jesus.

Verse 1:

There is no other name
In heaven can be found
Through whom we are redeemed
Through whom your grace abounds
No other name can save
But Jesus Christ our Lord

Verse 2:

There is no victory
But Jesus crucified
No other cure for sin

But that our Saviour died

No other hope we have
But that he rose again

Verse 3:

No other throne endures
No other song remains
But ‘Worthy is the Lamb
Who was for sinners slain’
When every knee shall bow
And tongue confess you are Lord,
You are Lord

1. How and when did you discover this truth about Jesus?
2. How does this biblical truth shape your life?

Read John 1:1-18.

1. What do you discover about the identity and work of Jesus from this passage?
2. How does a person become a child of God [v10-13]?

Read John 3:16-21

Notice how the focus is on the saving work of God through Christ.

1. Who is Christ?
2. Why did Christ come into the world?
3. A person's response to Christ determines their eternal destiny. What does this passage teach on this?

Read John 14:1-11.

1. In view of Jesus going away via the cross and resurrection how does he bring comfort to his disciples [v1-4]?
2. Jesus makes an exclusive claim in v6 about how a person can get access to God and heaven? What is it? Why do so many people in our society struggle with this claim?
3. Jesus rebukes his disciples in v7 for their slowness in coming to perceive who he is. Then in verses 8-11 he speaks of his relationship with his Father. What does he teach them?

In John 20:24-31 Thomas meets the resurrected Christ and finally realises who Jesus is!

1. Who does he declare Jesus to be in John 20:28?
2. If we believe the truth about Jesus what do we receive [20:31]?

The New Testament teaches that there is one Saviour and mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ. Check out what these verses say about this truth – **1 Tim.1:1, 15-17; 1 Tim.2:5-7; 2 Tim.1:8-12; Titus 2:13; Heb.9:15**

The death and resurrection of Christ declares Christ as Lord, God and Saviour. The transformed apostle proclaimed a risen Christ who offered salvation and to all who repented and believed in him [Eg Acts 2:36-41]. They demonstrated their faith and obedience through water baptism.

Discuss together how to take that step of faith and baptism and how to help others do so.

Prayer

That people would trust in Christ alone for salvation and be baptised.
Pray for the salvation of friends who don't yet know Christ.

Study 3

One Boast – the Cross

Introduction

Crucifixion was considered a shameful and disgraceful way to die in the Ancient Roman Empire.

One Roman politician remarked, 'The very word 'cross' should be far removed not only from the person of a Roman citizen but from his thoughts, his eyes and his ears.'

Yet Paul boasts in the cross. He is not ashamed to preach the message of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. He declares that 'the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.' [1 Cor 1.18]

Living in such an affluent city like Sydney it's easy to understand why we wouldn't boast in the cross. There are many other things we could boast about. Other things like our children, jobs, cars, homes, holidays, phones, and computers can become objects of boasting.

Discuss:

1. What do people generally 'boast' about? What might you or others be seeking to achieve by boasting?
2. Think of a time you have boasted.
How did it develop and what was the result?
3. Do you find that boasting in your 'self' or 'earthly things' achieves what you hoped, or does it often backfire? Explain.

Read 1 Corinthians 1.18

1. What is the message of the cross?
See also 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Romans 3:23-26
2. Why do you think this message is strange and even offensive to non-believers?
3. Why do you think the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing [v18]?
4. How does Paul feel about the message of the cross? What can we learn from Paul's attitude to the cross? [1 Corinthians 1:18]
5. How does that shape the way we think and speak about the cross?

Read 1 Corinthians 1.22-29

1. How did Jews perceive the message of Christ? How did the Gentiles?
2. How does Paul go on to explain God's use of 'foolish things' and how does God use 'ordinary' people? [vv26-29]
3. What does this mean for you as you speak about the cross to your friends, work colleagues and family?

Read Philippians 3.7-11

1. How does Paul speak about Christ in this passage?
2. How did this influence how he viewed all other things?
3. How does this compare to how you speak about Christ and other things besides Christ?

4. We so easily slip into self-boasting and self-promoting. David Garland considers the message of the cross to be an 'antidote to human self-glorification.' How is this so [vv10-11]?

Read Ephesians 2.8-9

1. What does it mean to say we are saved by grace and not by works? See also Ephesians 2:1-5.
2. We don't deserve God's favour - we deserve the opposite [Romans 3:23]. Yet, we are saved by grace [Romans 3:24]. How may these two truths influence our boasting?

Piper explains:

When our heart runs back up along the beam of blessing to the source in the blazing glory of the cross, then the worldliness of the blessing is dead, and Christ crucified is everything. This is no different than the goal of magnifying the glory of God... Therefore every enjoyment in this life and the next that is not idolatry [boasting in something else] is a tribute to the infinite value of the cross of Christ – the burning centre of the glory of God. And thus a cross-centered, cross-exalting, cross-saturated life is a God-glorifying life – the only God-glorifying life.

[John Piper – *Don't Waste Your Life* p.58-9]

3. What does Paul say about boasting in Ephesians 2.8-9?
4. When are you tempted to boast? Why?
5. When we boast, what does that reveal about our understanding of the message of the cross and God's offer of grace?

Prayer

Before you pray, share with one another areas that create the potential for boasting. Be honest; express why you are tempted to boast in your own strength or the strength of others.

Pray together thanking God that you are saved from your sins and have been brought into a loving relationship through the work of Jesus on the cross. Remember that the Holy Spirit dwells within you and is making you more like Christ. Boast in these great works of God.

Study 4

One Cost - everything

Introduction

Authentic Christianity is costly Christianity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a pastor and teacher was hanged in the concentration camp at Flossenburg. Germany, on April 9, 1945. He had participated in the resistance movement against the Nazis. He wrote a book called *The Cost of Discipleship*. One of his most famous sentences in the book is,

"The cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise God-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."

He also wrote,

"The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who has a left all to follow Christ."

What has it cost you to follow Christ, if anything?

Read Mark 8:31-38

1. In Mark 8, what is the problem with Peter's thinking and why does Jesus so strongly rebuke him? What do we learn from these verses [vv.31-33]?
2. Jesus calls us to a radical commitment if we are to follow him. What does it mean practically to:

deny yourself

take up your cross

follow Jesus

3. Jesus calls us to be willing to lose our lives for the gospel. How does having an eternal perspective help us to give ourselves completely to Christ [vv.35-37]?
4. What earthly things are some people unwilling to give up in order to gain Christ?
5. Christ calls us to an unashamed allegiance to Christ [v.38]. Why are we sometimes ashamed of the gospel? What struggles do you face in modern Australia to identify with Christ and to share his gospel? How can we help each other to be unashamed?

Read Luke 9:57-62

When people followed Jesus from Samaria to Jerusalem Jesus shocked his listeners by some seemingly outrageous demands in Luke 9:57-62.

Explain in your own words the cost of following Jesus

1. **‘Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay down his head’** [v58]
2. Man to Jesus - **‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’** Jesus to the man, **‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God’**. [59-60]
3. Man to Jesus – **‘but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.’** Jesus to the man – **‘No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.’** [62]

Read Luke 15:25-26.

One of the greatest hindrances to giving ourselves completely to Christ is the expectations and pressure of family, even a Christian family.

1. What is Jesus' point in these verses?
2. How is Jesus using the word 'hate'? What does he mean in light of the fact that he calls us to love each other? [See also Matt. 10:34-39]

In Matt.6:19-21 and 24 Jesus calls us to a focussed life with undivided devotion to God.

1. How can we store up for ourselves treasures in heaven?
2. Why can't we serve two masters? Why does God want complete devotion [v24]?

The apostle Paul's single passion in life is found **Philippians 1:20-21**. What is it? How does Paul's perspective help us to give ourselves completely to God despite the cost?

Prayer – Pray that we will take up our cross and follow Christ

"What a tragic waste when people turn away from the Calvary road of love and suffering. All the riches of the glory of God in Christ are on that road. All the sweetest fellowship with Jesus is there. All the treasures of assurance. All the ecstasies of joy. All the clearest sightings of eternity. All the noblest camaraderie. All the humblest affections. All the most tender acts of forgiving kindness. All the deepest discoveries of God's word. All the most earnest prayers. They are all on the Calvary Road where Jesus walks with his people. Take up your cross and follow Jesus. On this road and this road alone, life is Christ and death is gain. Life on every other road is wasted." [John Piper, Don't Waste your Life, p76]

Study 5

One Goal - to see others find their joy in God

Introduction

In the Bible the glory of God — *and our joy in him* — is the heart of mission. Therefore our goal in mission is to see others find their joy in God and glorify Him.

John Piper writes, 'The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. **"The LORD reigns, let the earth *rejoice*; let the many coastlands *be glad*!"** (Psalm 97:1). **"Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations *be glad and sing for joy*!"** (Psalm 67:3-4). . . Missions begins and ends in worship. (*Let the Nations Be Glad*, 3rd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 36)

Lesslie Newbigin writes,

"There has been a long tradition which sees the mission of the Church primarily as obedience to a command. It has been customary to speak of "the missionary mandate." This way of putting the matter is certainly not without justification, and yet it seems to me that it misses the point. It tends to make mission a burden rather than a joy, to make it part of the law rather than part of the gospel.

"If one looks at the New Testament evidence one gets another impression. ***Mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy.*** The news that the rejected and crucified Jesus is alive is something that cannot possibly be suppressed. It must be told. Who could be silent about such a fact?

"The mission of the Church in the pages of the New Testament is more like a fallout which is not lethal but life-giving. One searches in vain through the letters of St. Paul to find any suggestion that he anywhere lays it on the conscience of his reader that they ought to be active in mission. For himself it is inconceivable that he should keep silent. **"Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"** (1 Corinthians 9:16). But nowhere do we find him telling his readers that they have a duty to do so. . . .

"At the heart of mission is thanksgiving and praise. . . . When it is true to its nature, it is so to the end. ***Mission is an acted out doxology. That is its deepest secret. Its purpose is that God may be glorified.***" (*The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989], 116, 127)

How has finding joy and gladness in God motivated you to help others find salvation and joy in God?

1. What is the role of prayer in helping others find their joy in God?

[See 2 Thess.3:1; Col.4:2-4; Romans 10:1; Matt.6:9-11; Eph.6:18-19; Acts 13:2-3]

2. In Matthew 9:35-38 we gain an insight into the heart of Jesus for lost and broken people. What do we learn from him? When have you felt the same way? What does he ask us to do and why?

3. In Luke 19 Jesus encounters Zacchaeus, a tax collector and traitor, and visits his home. What do we learn from Jesus in this encounter? What is the end result for Zacchaeus?

4. Before we go and proclaim good news we need to know the good news. Summarise the good news in your own words. [See John 3:16-21; 1 Cor.15:1-8; Rom.3:21-26; 6:23; Eph.2:1-10]

5. The lost will not normally come to us but we have to go to them. How do the following verses speak to this truth? [See Mark 2:13-17; Matt.28:18-20; Acts 1:8-9; Rom.10:10-15; 1 Pet.3:15]
- a. Where do you rub shoulders and do life with unbelievers?
 - b. How and where are you going as an individual to reach others?
 - c. How and where are we going as a church to reach others?
 - d. Over the years we have reached out to people of many cultures and people from a variety of ages. We have also started a Mandarin congregation. Is there a new 'tribe' or group of people that we should focus on to show God's love and share his gospel?
6. Jesus called his disciples to be both salt and light in the world, and said, **'let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven'** [Matth.5:13-16]. What does it mean to be salt and light? What good deeds are we doing or should we be doing so that others praise and glorify our Father in heaven?
7. People are sometimes responsive to testimonies of changes lives. Paul shared his story and proclaimed the gospel in Act 26. He spoke of his life before knowing Christ, how he came to know Christ and his life since trusting in Christ. Can you briefly share your testimony in this way? Have you had a chance to share your story with others recently?

Prayer – Pray for God given opportunities to love people and share God's love with them

Study 6

One Body – to grow to maturity

Introduction

These days, spirituality is hot; religion is not. Community is hip, but the church is lame. Both inside the church and out, organised religion is seen as oppressive, irrelevant, and a waste of time. Outsiders like Jesus but not the church. Insiders have been told they can do just fine with God apart from the church. [Why We Love the Church, DeYoung p.13]

Where would you agree/disagree with this statement?

Discuss:

1. What conversations have you had with people about the importance or unimportance of the church? Share a few stories.
2. Why do you think people devalue the church, church attendance or even their own personal part in the church?
3. As a group make a list of all the various ways the church has been described as well as listing all the metaphors you can think of for the church BOTH Biblical and non-biblical.
4. Choose three or four and discuss why that metaphor might have been used, are these helpful or unhelpful in your opinion? Try and choose a few that aren't directly from the scriptures.

There are many metaphors or images used in the Scriptures to describe 'the church.' The church is the 'bride of Christ' (Rev 21.9, 19.7-8; 2 Cor 11.12; Eph 5.31-32), the family of God (2 Cor 6.18; Matt 12.49-50, Eph 2.19; Gal 6.10; 1 Tim 5.1), God's house (Heb 3.6; 1 Tim 3.14-15; 1 Peter 4.17), the temple of God, living stones built together with Christ as the cornerstone (1 Cor 3.11, 3.16-17, 6.19; 1 Peter 2.5-7), as well as others, such as field, olive tree, flock and vine.

Mark Dever identifies four major image clusters. The church is, *the people of God, the new creation, set apart* and finally *the body of Christ*. You may have noticed this was left out of the list above. Today we are particularly focusing on the image or metaphor of the 'body'.

Have each member read out one of the following verses:

Rom 12.4-5

1 Cor 10.17

1 Cor 12.12

1 Cor 12.27

Eph 4.12

Eph 5.23

Eph 5.30

Col 1.24

What do you find common amongst the texts that you read and heard?

Read Ephesians 4.1-6

1. What is the overarching reason Paul gives in v.4-6 for his instructions in v.1-3?
2. Paul continues to detail the various roles graciously given to people, particularly leaders, as they function in the church toward keeping these instructions (v.7-13). What is the result expressed firstly in v.12-13 and as well as v.14-16?
3. How does this remind us of the importance of the body, and the importance of our place or part within the body?

The Scriptures make it clear that if you're a part of Christ then you are a part of His body, the church. If you're a Christian you will be part of the church. Brett stressed the importance of the church *to God* and *for you* on Sunday.

1. Why is the church at Narwee Baptist important to you?

2. What are some reasons that you, or others, may give for feeling less inclined to be a part of this body; to attend church or a home group, to regularly meet with others?
3. Why do you think people are tempted to leave the church?

Just like when an athlete's body moves, as it should, the church 'body' when functioning well can be a beautiful thing. Just before expressing what he does in Ephesians 4, Paul says this about God's intent for the church:

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Ephesians 3.10-11)

Paul unpacks the body metaphor well in 1 Corinthians 12.12-27. Though 1 Corinthians 12, particularly in the first few and final verses of the chapter, addresses spiritual gifts we will focus on the body imagery.

Read 1 Corinthians 12.12-20

1. How are Paul's initial comments similar to those he made in Ephesians 4?
2. It can be easy to feel useless or insignificant within the church. Likewise we can easily feel like we are more superior to others or self-sufficient. What might make people feel like either one of these?
3. Given what Paul says in v.14-20, how would he respond:
 - a. to people who feel useless or an unimportant part of the church?
 - b. to people who feel superior or self-sufficient?

Paul teaches that all members of the body are important, planned and purposed, by God himself (v.18). See also Romans 12.4-5 & Ephesians 4.15-16.

1. If this is the case, if you are an important part in 'the body', what part do you play?

Note – this isn't defined by church specific ministries

2. When have you experienced the church as Paul talks about it in v.19-20?
3. What prevents you from playing your part?
What limits our church in being like Paul's description of the body?

Read 1 Corinthians 12.21-27

1. How does Paul suggest we can make every part of 'the body' know they are valuable (v.21-26)? What might it look like for our church and more specifically your group to function this way?

Take some time to encourage people in your group for the 'part they play.' You might like to write anonymous notes for people.

Individually write down where you could serve, or would like to learn more about being able to 'play your part.' People can share and then affirm one another in their pursuit. Together consider how you could support each other in that pursuit.

Prayer

Thank God for the church, the body of Christ. Thank Him for establishing it, that he is active and at work within the body. Ask that each person in your group may know how they can be part of the body and function together for God's glory.

Discover Your Gifts – SHAPE course.

This study didn't go into the specifics of Spiritual Gifts. However, as you consider your part in the body you might like to look into how you discover your gifts for ministry. We are hosting a SHAPE course soon so check details online or in the bulletin.

Study 7

One Lifestyle – like Christ

Introduction

In his book **'The Mark of a Christian'**, **Francis Schaeffer** wrote:

'In John 13:34-35, the point was that, if an individual Christian does not show love toward other true Christians, the world has a right to judge that he is not a Christian. Here, in John 17:20-23, Jesus is stating something else which is much more cutting, much more profound: We cannot expect the world to believe that the Father sent the Son, that Jesus' claims are true, and that Christianity is true, unless the world sees some reality of the oneness of true Christians.'

"Let us be careful, indeed, to spend a lifetime studying to give honest answers...But after we have done our best to communicate to a lost world, still we must never forget that the final apologetic which Jesus gave is the observable love of true Christians for true Christians."

Where have you seen Christians living and loving like Jesus and therefore making a profound impact on those who don't know Christ? Share examples from church at Narwee or other places.

Jesus called his disciples to imitate his sacrificial love and the apostle John echoed that call. John writes, **'Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.'** [1 Jn.2:6]

Read John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16-18; 1 John 4:9-11.

1. Describe Jesus' love in your own words – give examples of his extravagant love from the gospels.
2. What should our lives look like if we imitate Christ's sacrificial love?

In **John 13** Jesus washed his disciples' feet.

1. What was he teaching his disciples?
2. How should this impact how we think of ourselves and how we treat others?

Jesus' disciples were often tempted with the desire for power and prestige.

Read Mark 10:35-45.

1. What did James and John ask for? What does this say about them? [v35-37]?
2. Jesus responds and articulates his own mission and the mission of authentic disciples. What are his key points [v38-45]?
3. Why are we often so slow to follow his instruction in this area?

In **Philippians 2:1-4** Paul encourages us to have the attitude and character of Christ as we pursue unity in the church.

1. What attitude does Paul encourage?
2. Does he want you to pretend that you are worse than anyone else [v3]? If not, what does he mean?
3. Why are these attitudes necessary for unity? What does this tell us about some causes of disunity?

In **Philippians 2:5-11** we have a description of Jesus' incredible humility.

What is the 'high' point of Jesus' humility?

1. What motivated Jesus to stoop so low?
2. What was God's response to Jesus' humility?
3. What will it mean for us to have the same mindset as Jesus [v5]?

In Ephesians 4:23-24 the apostle Paul reminds us that we are no longer to live as the Gentiles do but that we are to be '**to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**'

Skim **Ephesians 4:25 -5:12** and note the things we are to give up and the things that we ought to do as followers of Christ. [NB We are dependent on the Holy Spirit to help us live this new life – Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16-26]

1. What attitudes, habits, sins are struggling to give up?
2. What successes have you had in your walk with Christ?
3. How can you encourage each other towards Christlikeness?

Prayer - that we will live more like Christ each day showing his humility, holiness and compassion.

Study 8

One Future – the Glory of God

Introduction

Optional Activity to start:

Your task, as a Home Group, is to create the '*ONE perfect future for all people*' i.e. 'heaven'. Make a list of what would and wouldn't be included in this future and give reasons why you have made those decisions.

Having performed the activity use the reflections questions below. Alternatively you could simply start with the reflection questions.

General Reflection:

1. What sort of future do people hope for or want to build?
Note: this doesn't have to be a 'heaven' post death future.
2. Does this perfect future cater for all people's desires?
3. If every person could live out *his or her* perfect future, what would the world look like? Why do you think this might be a problem?

Personal Reflection:

What sort of future do you hope for?

If you could live out *your* perfect future, what would the world look like?
Would it be a problem?

The ONE series has helped remind us that there is one God, one saviour and Lord, one creator and ultimate ruler of all. If this is true then there can only be ONE Future, a future determined by *this* God.

1. In the following passages, what is the promise for the future and what will the future reveal?

Isaiah 62:3

Habakkuk 2:14

2. How does this link to what we have been discovering throughout this series?

Few passages in all of scripture speak so wonderfully about the 'one future' than Revelation 21-22. These chapters are full of symbols and beautiful metaphors. Though we will take a fairly superficial flyby, as we do, we begin to see what the 'one future' is all about.

Read Revelation 21.1-14

1. What are the various ways this passage described the one *new* future (v.1-14)? On Sunday Brett explained a number of the metaphors or symbols, which one stuck out to you most?
2. What is new about this future? What appeals to you about this description of our final dwelling place (v.1-8)?
3. Why is this 'picture' so hard but also wonderful to grasp?

Read Revelation 21.22-27

1. Why is there no need for a temple, sun or moon? How does this help us understand what really matters about this future?

Dig a little deeper – 'the temple'

If you have time and would like to 'dig a little deeper' these questions unpack what the previous question, specifically in reference to the temple.

Discuss the significance of the tabernacle and then the temple.

Read – Exodus 40.34, 2 Chronicles 5.13-14; 1 Kings 8.11

1. What was the temple used for?
2. What happened every time the temple was filled with smoke or the cloud?
3. What has happened in the one future that makes such a special and sacred place unnecessary?
4. What might v.24-26 mean? See Isaiah 60.3-5, 11-12 and 19-20. How does this continue to present what will be central in the one new future?

Read Revelation 22:1-5

1. John continues to describe the ‘newness’ of this one future. How do these verses add to what has already been described?
2. In Exodus 33.20-23 Moses is denied the privilege of seeing the face of God. Here that privilege is given to God’s servants, his name is also written on their foreheads. What does this tell us about our relationship and interaction with God in the one new future?
3. What are the requirements for entering the city? (21.6-7, 27; 22.12-14)

There is only one future, the glory of God the one sitting on the Throne and the Lamb. We can share in this glory and experience the majesty of the one new future *only* through the work of the Lamb.

How does this give us all the more reason to share the truth of the gospel?

Read Revelation 22:20-21

The one ‘who testifies to these things’ is Jesus; the one who confirms our future, the one who displays God’s glory, the one who will bring the new heavens and the new earth.

'ONE' Series, NBC, 2018

Can we confidently say, 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus'?

With this question in mind, answer the following:

1. What prevents us from confidently, consistently and joyfully saying *Come, Lord Jesus*?
2. Look back at 'the futures' from the opening to this study, why do people prefer those visions of the future than the one the Scriptures reveal?
3. What visions of 'the future' cause us to diminish our view of what it means to share in the glorious future?

We started our series reflecting on the *Shema*, from Deuteronomy 6.4-5. Read the Shema and Jesus words in Matthew 6.19-21.

Reflecting on these passages again where is your heart, where are your treasures and what are they grounded in?

Ask yourself again, can you confidently say, 'Amen. Come, Lord Jesus'?

Prayer

As we wrap up this series, use what Scripture promises to those who follow the one true God to inform your prayers:

Phil 3.20-21

Revelation 21.3-4

Isaiah 40.31

John 14.1-3

(you might have others you want to add)

Ask God that we would be so captivated by the one future offered to us by the one true God of our passions, through the one saviour. That we would have one boast, be willing to pay the one cost, together striving for the one goal as one body, living the one lifestyle as we eagerly and expectantly await this one future.

Additional Notes:

