

GO

To see lives transformed

HOMEGROUP
STUDY BOOKLET

Go... for He is worthy

STUDY NUMBER ONE

Main Idea: We are called to make disciples so that people will glorify God for his mercy.

Intro

In his book, **'The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission'** [p25-26] John Dickson tells this story.

'A few years ago, I was having coffee with a friend in café at my local beach. I was explaining to him what our church was doing to promote Christ among the residents of the area. At one point I noticed a woman a few tables away looking inquisitively at me. I assumed she was a fellow Christian interested in listening into our conversation. I just kept on talking.

A few minutes later, the woman got up from her table, paid her bill, walked straight across to me and, at what seemed like the top of her voice, said: "So, you want to convert the world. How dare you!" And off she stormed. It was at point I realized she probably wasn't a Christian.

I thought of the perfect comeback – about an hour later! At the time I was dumbfounded. For a moment I even wondered: "Maybe our mission is presumptuous. Perhaps promoting the news about Christ is the stuff of fanaticism rather than a reasoned, modern faith."

How might you have answered the woman? What is the primary reason for evangelism and mission?

1. The Bible asserts that there is only one God. How is this a motivation for mission?

See Genesis 1:1, Deut. 6:5; 1 Cor. 8: 4-6, Rev 4:11

2. Psalm 96 is a beautiful psalm declaring the lordship of one God and includes a plea that God's people proclaim this reality throughout the world.
 - a. What are the people of God urged to do in verses 1-5? What are they proclaiming? How will the nations hear the message in the temple context?
 - b. In verses 7-9 the nations are addressed directly. What are the nations urged to do?
 - c. What is the logic behind the call of Psalm 96 to promote God's glory and salvation to an unbelieving world? [see verses 4-5].

Dickson [p31] writes,

'Monotheism and mission are intimately related. The existence of just one God makes our mission to the many essential. This is not to say there are no other reasons for promoting the gospel as well. There are. For instance, the fact that our friends and neighbours need salvation from the coming judgement provides a real motivation to promote the news of a Saviour. Indeed, the final paragraphs of Psalm 96 remind us of this theme.' [See verses 10-13]

3. In the passage known as the Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus sends out his apostles to make disciples of all nations.

What are they called to do on this mission [v.19-20]?

What is the single reason given for this mission [v.18]?

‘We promote God’s glory to the ends of the earth not principally because of any human needed but fundamentally because of God’s/Christ’s unique worthiness as the Lord of heaven and earth. Promoting the gospel to the world is more than a rescue mission [though it is certainly that as well]; it is reality mission. It is our plea to all to acknowledge that they belong to one Lord.’ [Dickson, p35]

4. John Stott similarly argues for the glory and worship of God as the primary goal of evangelism and mission in his commentary on Romans.

‘The highest of missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission [important as that is], nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing [strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God...], but rather zeal and passionate zeal – for the glory of Jesus Christ... Only one imperialism is Christian... and this is concern for his imperial Majesty Jesus Christ, and for the glory of his empire.’ [John Stott, Romans, BST, p53]

How do the following verses confirm the glory and worship of God as primary in witness and mission? Romans 1:5, Romans 15:8-12, Romans 11:36

5. Worship of the one true God is the goal of witness and mission.

‘Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.’ [John Piper, Let the Nations be Glad, Second Edition, p17]

But Piper reminds us that worship is also the fuel of witness and mission. You will not commend to the world what you don’t cherish in your heart.

The psalmist says in 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.”**

The prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 26:8

‘Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts.’

The apostle Paul says in Phil.3:7-8

**“⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.
⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ...”**

What is at the centre of your affections?

What things get in the way of a life totally committed to Christ and his purposes?

What can you do personally and through your group to ensure that Christ is at the centre of your affections and that you live for the glory of God?

6. John Piper writes,

‘God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him’.

When we delight in God’s presence, when we like to be around him, when we treasure his fellowship, when we adore him with all our hearts, when he is our everything then he uses us most profoundly to bring glory to himself.

How have you seen this truth played out in real life?

Prayer

Pray that as you ‘Go’ people you meet will glorify and worship God.

Go ... and proclaim a life changing message

STUDY NUMBER TWO

Main Idea: To share the gospel effectively with others, we need to know both the gospel and the people we are sharing it with.

The focus of this study is to explore how it is that Paul shared the gospel with different people. We'll see that the gospel doesn't change but Paul focuses on different elements, starts in different places and ends in different ways depending on the people he is talking to. This should compel us to know the gospel deeply, and the people we are reaching meaningfully, so that we can share the gospel faithfully and effectively. In other words – know the message, know who you're talking to.

Intro

1. What makes evangelism effective?

2. What are the essential elements of the gospel?

Exploring the Apostle Paul's practice of sharing the gospel.

3. Explore the following passages below in small groups. Answer the following questions for each passage:

- I. What does Paul say? What elements of the gospel story does he use?
- II. How does Paul structure the message and what tone/manner is he using?

- III. Why might he have chosen to share the message of the gospel this way?

Passages

- a. **Acts 13:13-43** (speaking to Jewish believers on a missionary journey)

- b. **Acts 17:16-34** (speaking to Gentile believers in Athens, Greece)

- c. **Romans 1:1-7; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:1-10** (writing to a Jewish and gentile audience, through a letter. He hasn't personally met the Romans, but he does know them, unlike the Ephesians with whom he has a deep personal relationship)

4. Compare those three passages.

- a. What elements of sharing the Gospel were **consistent/similar**?
- b. What elements of sharing the Gospel were **Different**?
- c. What could be the reasons for this?

5. Using these elements and our understanding of the people in Suburban Sydney, what elements of the gospel might be most relevant and what structure might our approach take?

[When we share the gospel with others](#)

Paul both knows the story of the Gospel and the people he is reaching exceptionally well. There is the unchanging truth of the gospel, and the ever-changing context of the people when he (and we) share the gospel. So it's really helpful- no matter when or where Christians are living- to deeply understand the gospel and to understand the people we are longing to see come to Christ. That is going to come through prayer and relationship with them (listening, experiences, and time), but often we don't think deeply about how the gospel relates best to each person. To help us in thinking deeply about our people, pray and look for opportunities to share the gospel, think through and answer the questions below.

6. Think of two people you know who are not yet followers of Jesus and then complete the attached questions about those people.

Person 1: Name =

Who they are -

- a. Living situation?
- b. What they do during the week?
- c. What are their passions/ hobbies?
- d. Their current belief/value system?
- e. What are their hopes, dreams and fears?
- f. Awareness, understanding and posture towards Jesus?
- g. Significant events in life?

How the Gospel relates to them:

- h. What elements of the gospel are going to be most meaningful to them?
- i. What opportunities have there been, or do you foresee being a possibility?
- j. What practices could you adopt to love them like Jesus and share the message of Jesus with them?

Person 2: Name =

Who they are -

- a. Living situation?
- b. What they do during the week?
- c. What are their passions/ hobbies?
- d. Their current belief/value system?
- e. What are their hopes, dreams and fears?
- f. Awareness, understanding and posture towards Jesus?
- g. Significant events in life?

How the Gospel relates to them:

- h. What elements of the gospel are going to be most meaningful to them?
- i. What opportunities have there been, or do you foresee being a possibility?
- j. What practices could you adopt to love them like Jesus and share the message of Jesus with them?

7. Share this with the others in your group and then prayer for those people.

Go... in the Spirit and in prayer

STUDY NUMBER THREE

Main Idea: We are called to Go... depending on God and empowered by the Spirit.

Intro

‘Going... to see lives transformed’ is a spiritual work. We don’t do it in our own strength. That is why God has given us his Spirit and prayer. John Piper puts it this way,

‘Life is war. That’s not all it is. But it is always that. Our weakness in prayer is owing largely to our neglect of this truth. Prayer is primarily a walkie talkie for the mission of the church as it advances against the powers of darkness and unbelief... Prayer gives us the significance of frontline forces and gives God the glory of a limitless provider. The one who gives the power gets the glory’ [Let the Nations be Glad, p45]

Why do Christians often fail to pray for the lost and for gospel opportunities?

Share a story of when you witnessed God answer your prayers and a person became a Christian or you had a gospel conversation.

1. What is the focus of the Lord’s prayer in **Matthew 6:9-10**?

What does ‘your kingdom come’ mean and why is it so important?

2. Read Matthew 9:35- 38

How did Jesus respond when he saw the crowds?

v36

v37-38

How should we respond when we see lost people all around us?

When was the last time you felt such deep compassion for a lost person?

3. Read Acts 1:1-11

What evidence is there that the disciples did not understand the kingdom that Jesus set up?

The apostles were not to rely on their own strength in the work of mission. Jesus promised that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them. How would the Holy Spirit give them confidence in the work of witness and mission?

What was going to be the result of the Holy Spirit coming on them?

4. In **Acts 4:1-22**, Peter and John had been arrested and placed in prison for proclaiming Jesus' resurrection following the healing of a lame beggar in Acts 3. In Acts 4:8 Peter was 'filled with the Holy Spirit' as he defended his preaching. They were then ordered not to preach about Jesus and were released. Peter and John then gathered with the other disciples and prayed.

Read Acts 4:23-31. What key things do you learn from this prayer about God, his plans and the right response to opposition?

5. Read Colossians 4:2-4

How would you measure devotion to prayer?

What does it mean to be watchful?

What does this passage teach us about the content of prayer?

Where have you seen open doors to the message this week?

Have you had a chance to proclaim the gospel this week?

6. In Romans 10:1 Paul tells us that it was his practice to plead with God on behalf of people who do not yet follow Jesus [Jews, in this case]:

‘Brother’s my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.’

Who do you pray for to be saved? Who will you start praying for?

Think through your sphere of influence and begin praying.

NBC ministries

Family

Friends

Work/Uni/School

Sport and recreation groups

Neighbours

Strangers

Other

Pray, that as we ‘Go’, we will be empowered by the Holy Spirit in our witness fully depending on God’s enabling through prayer.

Go... as a friend of all

STUDY NUMBER FOUR

Main Idea: We are called to Go... sharing God's love with all types of people for everyone has value in God's eyes.

Intro

'One of the most striking aspects of Jesus' ministry in its first century Palestinian setting was his regular socialising with people called "sinners". "Sinners" were those in Jewish society who lived outside the laws of the Old Testament as interpreted by the rabbis. They were not all prostitutes and thieves – that would be a caricature. They could easily be wealthy businessmen who neglected going to the synagogue and/or did business with the occupying Romans [tax collectors, for instance]. They were if you like, the 'unreligious' in a strictly religious society.

Social interaction with sinners (and with Gentiles) was religiously prohibited in Jesus's day. In particular, you were not to share a meal with such people. In ancient societies, eating and drinking were powerful symbols of fellowship. To share food and drink with people was to identify with and, in a sense, to endorse them. Jesus however flaunted these centuries-old-customs. He wined and dined with sinners on a regular basis – so much that the 'pious' in his society began to slander him in public. Matthew 11:19 records one such slander: "Here is a glutton and drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and 'sinners'". [John Dickson, The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission, p49]

In your interactions with people are you more like Jesus or the religious establishment?

Where have you recently have stepped out from your comfort zone to share God's love with others?

1. If we are to build connections with people, we need to go to their things. Jesus and his friends regularly accepted invitations to homes and dinners. Even if they were going to be difficult encounters.

- a. How did Jesus use these encounters to build relationships, proclaim the gospel and see lives changed?

Luke 5:27- 32

Luke 7:36-50

Luke 19:1-10

- b. If we are to 'Go... to see lives transformed', if we are to make authentic disciples, then we need to be in the community engaging with people.

In his book, '**How to talk about Jesus**', (p26-30) Sam Chan encourages us to be actively involved in our communities. He urges us to...

Go to their things [A meal, a concert, a Tupperware party, a fundraiser, trivia nights, etc]

Get onto their rosters – at the sporting fields - BBG roster, umpiring roster etc.

Become part of their village

In your life stage what opportunities do you have to build relationships with non-Christians?

2. Hospitality is a key ingredient in loving people and sharing Christ. It provides the space and permission for gospel conversations to take place.

Mark Mittelberg in 'Becoming a Contagious Christian' says **'you need to BBQ first'**.

Sam Chan writes that you need to think of **'coffee, dinner, gospel'** as three simple steps of evangelism.

In his book **'Surprise the World'** lists 5 habits of highly missional people. The second habit is **'EAT – I will eat with three people this week – at least one of whom is not a member of our church.'**

As you consider your family and friends [new and old] what can you do to build deeper relationships that might lead to gospel conversations?

3. John Dickson, in 'The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission, p53, writes, **"Paul, the one-time Pharisee, became (in)famous in Jewish and Christian circles for his scandalously flexible social conduct. Not only did he preach to pagans, he broke with his Pharisaic customs and ate with them as well... Even some of the early Christians found Paul's behaviour problematic. The apostles Peter and Paul had a rather public argument over the question of eating with pagans/Gentiles [Gal. 1:11-21]. Other Christians continued to criticise Paul, but he could only reply that his flexibility, like that of Jesus, was oriented toward the salvation of outsiders."**

What key principles of mission are articulated by Paul in I Corinthians 9:19-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1?

How might these principles be applied to your own life and witness?

4. As we 'Go...as a friend of all' we go with the gospel in our hearts and on our lips.

a. Some 'Go' as evangelists.

Paul reminded the Ephesian church that God had gifted some to be evangelists.

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers." [Eph.4:11]

Further, Timothy who was a Pastor, was urged to do the work of an evangelist.

"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." [2 Tim. 4:5]

Evangelists seem to have a special gift to proclaim the gospel and call people to faith. Gospel witness for them flows naturally or dare I say supernaturally.

Who are the evangelists in your network? How can we encourage them to use their gifting for the glory of God?

b. Read 1 Peter 3:13-17. Although we are not all evangelists, we can all 'Go' and be ready with an apt reply. What principles and attitudes are described here which are vital for every believer?

Pray that as we 'Go', we will fully embrace all people, ready to give a reason for the hope that we have in Christ.

Go ... and make authentic Christ-like disciples.

STUDY NUMBER FIVE

Main Idea: Exploring our authenticity as disciples so that we can be an effective witness for Christ in our communities.

Intro

In the sermon on Sunday, we explored that Jesus said, there is a cost to following him; he calls for authentic disciples. In this study we are exploring the role of the “messenger” (us) in how the message is shared. In our role in making authentic disciples, we are called to be authentic disciples ourselves. Elliot Clarke encourages us, stating that ***“Part of evangelism and discipleship is calling others to follow us as we follow Christ – for them to be who we were. This is a reason why personal holiness is critical for the Evangelist... Our Conduct is critical to our witness.”***

This authentic Christlike lifestyle can have the very positive effect of becoming highly attractive to some non-Christians. This has been the way since the Church began. In talking about the early church Mike Frost writes ***“ordinary believers were infiltrating every part of society and living the kind of questionable lives that evoked curiosity about the Christian message. They surprised the empire with their unlikely lifestyle.”***

In your life, in what ways have you seen Christians living Christlike lives which looked “questionable and curious” to other people, in such a way that it has evoked them to ask ‘why’ or ask specific questions about the Christian message?

Picking up our cross in Following Jesus (Luke 9:21-26)

Read Luke 9:21-26

1. How does Jesus describe the trajectory of his life?
2. How does he connect and describe the road of discipleship for those who choose to follow him?
3. Why is picking up our cross necessary in our witness?
4. In what areas and ways of life is it difficult to pick up our cross?
5. How can you support one another in picking up our cross?

Living attractively different for a reason (Titus and 1 Peter)

Read Titus 2:1-10

6. What does Paul tell Titus to teach and model to the Christians and what’s the purpose?

7. How could these behaviours result in the “teaching about God our saviour being attractive”?

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12

8. What are Christians called to do?
9. How does that lifestyle impact our evangelism?
10. Read 1 Peter 3:13-15: What are the opportunities that arise from living a holy life amongst our culture?
11. How is this encouraging in our witness to be evangelistic?
12. In what ways do you feel prepared and/or unprepared to “give a reason for the hope that you have”?

Apply Deeper

13. What are some areas in your life in which you are not living a holy lifestyle and therefore not living an attractively different life which evokes curiosity and questions from others?

14. In our culture today, what would be specific ways for us to live that make the teaching about God more attractive as we live authentic, attractively different lives?

15. What practices and rhythms could you strengthen or develop that can help you live these out in the hope that it will arouse curiosity among unbelievers? How can you partner and support one another in doing this?

Go... as salt and light

STUDY NUMBER SIX

Main Idea: We are called to Go... preserving the good in society and shining Christ's light through our good works.

Introduction

There are people in the world that will never open a Bible or visit a church. But these same people will come into contact with Christians, listen to their speech, watch their actions and consider their good works.

Dickson writes, **'many throughout our churches will attest to the remarkable and unpredictable power of what you might call the 'silent' dimension of the promotion of the gospel: the good works of God's people.'** [The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission, p87]

In what ways have Christians made a positive contribution to society so that people have stood up and taken notice?

Read **Matthew 5:1-16**

1. These verses follow the Beatitudes [Matt.5:1-12]. Jesus implies that people who recognise their spiritual poverty and are characterised by mourning, meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity, peacemaking and faithfulness in persecution can have a profound influence in the world.

How do people who exhibit these characteristics showcase God's love and glory and make a positive impact on others?

2. Before refrigeration, salt was used to keep meat from rotting. Salt was also used to add flavour. What then does Jesus' statement '**You are the salt of the earth**' tell us about society and the church's role in it?

3. What has been in the news recently that indicates society is rotting and decaying?

4. What are some of the practical ways we can function as salt [prevent decay, add flavour] where we live and work? [v13]

5. What might cause Christians to lose their saltiness?

6. Jesus' second statement is **'You are the light of the world'** [v14]. How does the church's role as light complement its role as salt?

7. Why might we be tempted to hide our light [v15]

8. We are urged to let our light shine that people might see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. [v16].

John Dickson writes, **"These words are fascinating and unexpected. The Lord here insists that the world will be brought to its knees before God through the 'good deeds' of his people... As good deeds are done by Christians as a community, light shines and others are drawn into the worship of God."**

[The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission, p89, 91]

What 'good deeds' are being done regularly in and through our church?

Can you think of examples where the good deeds of Christians have brought people closer to God and even trust in Christ?

9. **"When denominations, congregations or home groups ask: How can we better care for the sick? How can we meet the needs of the poor? What more can we do for the elderly? How can we foster peace? and so on, they are not only asking question of obedience: they are also asking questions of mission. They are searching for fresh ways to be, and to convey, the light of God's glory in an unbelieving world."** [John Dickson, The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission, p96]

Are there new 'good works' that we should be involved in as we **'Go...to see lives transformed'** so that we shine as the 'light of the world'? Is there something that your home group or ministry group can do in 2024?

Pray that as we 'Go' we will both preserve the good in society and shine the light of Christ's love.

Go ... and reach out to all nations

STUDY NUMBER SEVEN

Main Idea: We are called to send/partner and to go ourselves, to all peoples of the world, so all nations have the opportunity to hear and come into relationship with Jesus.

The need for mission beyond our borders (Romans 10:8-15)

Read Romans 10:8-15

1. What do we learn about the way and necessity of our salvation from these verses?
2. How it is that a person can be saved; think through God's role and our role?
3. In what ways can we engage with people **locally** who have never heard the gospel?
4. In what ways can we engage with people **internationally** who have never heard the gospel?
5. Who are people among us, or who you know, that we can encourage to be "sent to the nations"

Partnering in mission together (Paul's Partners)

Flick through Philippians

6. Explore the ways that Philippians were on mission with Paul.
 - a. Phil 1:5
 - b. Phil 1:19
 - c. Phil 1:27-30
 - d. Phil 4:10-19
7. How do these verses inform the way we partner with missionaries? How can we affirm and begin to incorporate this in current partnerships?

Read Colossians 4:2-4

8. Paul's first focus is prayer(4:2). In verses 3-4 Paul asks for prayer for himself and those with him in prison [the 'sent' missionaries]. What are we told to pray for them and why is it important to pray for these things?
9. We're obviously not going to pray for Paul (he's in eternity with Christ) however the principles are still applicable to us. How can we take practical steps to adopt a genuinely habitual prayer life for other gospel workers around the world?

The people we partner with in Mission

10. Tom Steller writes, "*There is a big difference between a church 'having' a missionary and a church 'sending' a missionary.*" Discuss this statement.

11. In what ways can your group be engaged in being part of sending and partnering with a Missionary/ies this year?

12. At Narwee we currently have several cross-cultural workers active in the field. Read through their prayer letters and pray for them. You can also consider other ways you can encourage and partner with them.

Notes/Prayer Points
