

Encountering the Good News

Many Christians find that the Christian life is not all they expected. They try to be good people and go to church on a Sunday but, on the whole, their lives are very similar to most of the people around them.

Most Christians have an understanding of the good news, the gospel, which is good enough – up to a point. It provides them with salvation, but not satisfaction; it offers answers to some important questions, but not answers they can easily explain to their family, friends and neighbours. It offers them the hope of eternal life in the world to come, but not much guidance about how they should live in the world here and now.

Part of the problem is that we are so accustomed to hearing the gospel message, we no longer listen to it: the familiar words wash over us and make us feel good, but we do not really hear them. We need a different perspective on the familiar doctrines to enable us to encounter the ancient truth in a fresh way.

I am offering a series of three sessions to help Christians discover afresh the life-changing and world-changing message of Jesus and the early Church. The sessions can be delivered in a single day, once a week for three weeks, once a month for three months, or somewhere in between.

- Session 1: The Good News of Jesus
- Session 2: Understanding the Good News
- Session 3: Living and Giving the Good News

The sessions can be straight teaching, but they are best delivered as combinations of workshops, teaching and structured dialogues or question and answer times. The teaching and the interactive parts can each last between 30 and 60 minutes; if both parts are 60 minutes, it is friendly to allow a 15 minute break in the middle, so each full session can last between 1 hour and 2¼ hours.

The sessions can be tailored for a number of different contexts: for example, a church leadership team (such as the Eldership, PCC, etc.), a seminar for a midweek group, or a Sunday sermon to the whole church. The sessions are each Biblical, practical and – hopefully! – inspirational.

I do not assume any particular church tradition, knowledge or experience. The aim is to provide a solid starting point for future growth and exploration, a framework within which effective answers to the big questions can be progressively discovered and put into practice – and which we are happy (maybe even keen!) to talk about with people outside the church.

For more details, please contact me by email (paul@hazelden.org.uk) or telephone (07816 893 676), or visit <http://strongfoundations.pbworks.com>. Thank you.

Paul Hazelden, August 2018.