



Weekend Away
12-14 Nov 2021

The Church



Timetable

Friday

5.00pm	Children's Tea
7.00 - 9.00pm	Supper
9.15 - 9.45pm	Welcome and introduction to the weekend

Saturday

8.10 - 8.30am	Prayer meeting
8.30 – 9.15am	Breakfast (available from 7.30am)
9.30 - 10.20am	Session 1
10.20 – 10.45am	Coffee break
10.45 – 11.45am	Session 2
11.45 – 12.10pm	Coffee break
12.10 – 1.00pm	Session 3
1.00 - 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00 - 4.00pm	Free time
4.00 - 4.30pm	Afternoon tea
4.30 - 5.30pm	Group Time
5.00pm	Children's Tea
5.30 - 6.00pm	Question Time
6.00 - 7.00pm	Free time
7.00 - 8.15pm	Supper
8.15 - 9.00pm	Evening entertainment

Sunday

8.15 - 8.55am	Breakfast (available from 7.30am)
9.00am	Leave Moor Hall for St Nick's
11.00am	Back at St Nick's (usual Sunday Service)

Session 1 – The Church In The World

Introduction

The bible as history

How to make sense of life

Two voices

1. “Come, let us build ourselves a city”

Genesis 11v1-4 ¹ Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. ² And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. ³ And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

Characteristics

Conclusion

2. “I will build my church”

Matthew 16v13-18 ¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Church is built around:

Jesus’ identity:

2 Samuel 7v11b-13 the Lord declares to you that **the Lord will make you a house.** ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ **He shall build a house for my name**, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

Jesus’ mission:

Matthew 16v21 From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Characteristics

Matthew 16v18 *And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church**, and the **gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

Conclusion

It's all about vantage point

What about Babylon?

Revelation 18v21 *Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more..."*

What about the church?

Revelation 21v2 *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

So: which voice will we listen to?

Personal Reflection

If a friend/colleague/housemate/family member were to audit *your* life, what would they conclude *you* live for? *Think about your: diary, wallet, what you think and talk about*

Discussion Questions (in 2s or 3s)

1. "Come, let us build ourselves a city"

Where are we most tempted to give ourselves to things of this world? Be honest! *Think about all the ways you use your: time, energy, resources, thought-life?*

2. "I will build my church"

What Jesus says about his church stands in contrast to the voices of our world.

- a) How should that change our thinking?

- b) What would it look like to give more weight to Jesus' voice?

Session 2 – The Church: Our Identity & Responsibility

What would a friendly alien conclude that people in our world lived for?

1 Peter 1v22 - 2v12

²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴ for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you. **2:1** So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation- ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." ⁷ So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸ and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

To be church means to have:

1. Wholehearted love for one another

- a) Family-like love: 'sincere brotherly love' (v22a)
- b) Intentional love: 'love one another earnestly' (v22b-25)
- c) Keeping worldliness in check: 'put away' (2v1-3)

Discussion Questions (in 2s or 3s)

What have you been most struck by?

How might this next week look different for you given what we've just heard?

2. Confidence in our privileged status

- a) Unparalleled security: '*you yourselves are being built*' (2v4-5)

Note: expect rejection (2v4-8)

- b) Belonging to God: '*his own possession*' (2v9-11a)

So... cultivate a mindset that goes hand-in-hand

Discussion Questions (in 2s or 3s)

The church is a huge privilege - being part of it and playing our part in it. However, we don't often see it that way.

- a) Why is that?
- b) If we saw it as such, how would that impact our lives?

3. Living a life that is noticeably different

- a) Not worldly (2v11b)

- b) But '*honourable*' (2v12)

....and expect church to change the world

Session 3 – The Church: Our Mission To The World

Matthew 28v16-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Introduction

How other churches might conclude a weekend on church:

-
-
-

Jesus says: *Go therefore and make disciples (Mat 28v19)*

What should motivate us?

Remember: Babylon will be judged

Personal Mission field

Note: **Acts 20:26** *Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you.....*

1. Jesus has unchallengeable authority

Matthew 28v18 *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*

Daniel 7:13-14 *I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

2. We must tell everyone about Jesus

Matthew 28v19 *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations*

Disciple-making-disciples

"Orders Remain Unchanged"

3. All disciples are involved in the work of converting (0 to 1) AND the work of building up (1 to 9)

Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

Conversion:

Building up:

Matthew 28v20 *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*

4. Jesus promises to be with us all the way

Matthew 28v20 *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age*

Conclusion

"I will build my church"

¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

Discussion Questions (in 2s or 3s)

1. What Jesus asks of all disciples is exciting! Agree / disagree? Why?
2. What are the big encouragements in the text and how will they help us overcome our fears?
3. How should the mission of the church change my:
 - a) Prayer life?
 - b) Overarching aim and concern for everyone I see each day?

Group Time – Letting It All Sink In

Building on Session One

1. We have a vantage point over the world's history from the start, beyond our time, to the end. How does that shape our understanding of the significance of church?
2. How should the future outcomes of 'This World' vs 'God's Church' shape our understanding of:
 - a) All the things we would like to achieve? *Think about: qualifications, milestones, climbing the corporate ladder...*
 - b) All the things we have achieved and take pride in?
 - c) What we daydream about or spend time planning? *Think about: owning things (car, house, gadgets...), looks, relationships, holidays...*
 - d) What we spend time worrying about or trying to solve? *Think about: looks, aging, security, comforts, house, parents, children...*

Building on Session Two

1. There is no such thing as a 'lone ranger' in the church. Where are we most in danger of living this way? What truths from 1 Peter will help?
2. Each one of us, with whatever age/experience/faith/gifts/maturity we bring, have a responsibility to love, build up and serve the church.
 - a) Where do we sometimes find ourselves resisting this?
Why is that, honestly?
 - b) How should a right understanding of this impact our attitude to other Christians?
3. We are God's chosen possession, built into his church. How should this impact how we think about our boss' opinion of us?

Building on Session Three

1. What keeps us from telling others the gospel? Be honest!
2. How can we help ourselves and each other to keep holding out the gospel to others?
3. Every single person we meet either needs to be 'saved' or 'built up'. Is that a helpful way to think about people? Why/why not?
4. What questions are you left with? Write them down!

Personal Reflection

How much time do you spend:

- a) Considering ways to love others at church?
- b) Complaining about others at church?
- c) Asking for forgiveness for ways we've failed to love other Christians?
- d) Asking for help to forgive others?

Spend some time later thinking and praying about this. Where do you need to ask for God's forgiveness, or the forgiveness of others, for ways we have failed to love them (well)?

How much time do you spend:

- a) Thinking about our identity in this way? What difference would it make if we did?
- b) Talking with others about our privileged status? What difference would it make if we did?

What should we say to someone when they say:

1. *"I'm only going away for a few weeks/months. It'll be fine."*
2. *"I always get such a hard time for being a Christian."*
3. *"There's a new person. I'll introduce them to the staff - they'll welcome them."*
4. *"I prefer to just sit and listen in our small group discussion."*
5. *"I can't see myself being friends with anyone in my small group. I'll ask to move groups."*
6. *"No one will miss me if I slip away at the end of the service."*
7. *"Because no one messaged me, clearly no one missed me."*

How might we respond to these myths:

1. My church needs to provide for all my relational and emotional needs
2. My church family trumps my actual family every time
3. My actual family trumps my church family every time
4. God will provide a partner for me from my church
5. To say that I should find my contentment in Jesus is not realistic today
6. If I store up any bitterness towards my church family it doesn't really matter