

St Annes Ryde
ANGLICAN CHURCH



**CGS 15 Term 4
2008**

Just Start Talking & The time is fulfilled



Bible based Discussion Material

**prepared by Greg Burke and linked to sermons
preached at St Anne's Ryde Anglican Church**

Discussion 1. Rich man, poor man ... a Christian response to global poverty (Sermon 19th October)

1. Someone has said “The problem with being discontented is that you can’t enjoy what God has provided for you”. Do you agree ? How does this work?
2. If someone asked you to tell them your “secret of contentment” how would you answer them?
3. Why do you think Paul says that “**godliness** with contentment is great gain”? 1Tim 6:6. What does he contrast this with in the previous verse?
4. Do you agree that planned generosity is better than “knee jerk” generosity? Why/why not? Is there a place for spontaneous generosity along side planning?
5. How would you respond to the person who says that we need to “clean up our own backyard” and eliminate poverty in Australia before we give money to people overseas? What Bible passages would you use?
6. Do you think gospel preaching or relief of poverty should take priority for a Christian in her/his planned generosity? Give your reasons. Is there another option?
7. List the ways that God has been generous to you. Discuss the relative value of the following as motives for giving:
 1. Awareness of need
 2. Guilt because I am well off
 3. Compassion
 4. Sympathy
 5. Thankfulness for God’s generosity
 6. Being emotionally troubled by images of suffering on TV news
8. Read Psalm 146:5-7 and Proverbs 31:8-9. What do these tell us about the character of God?
9. How helpful is this “Stand up” prayer as a model for our own prayer and concerns?

Lord God,

You offer healing and hope -

spiritual, physical, emotional and social healing for all people as they trust Jesus.

We thank you for the example of Jesus who appreciated and valued the poor and those who were at the edges of society.

Be with the hungry and homeless who cry out to you.

Be with parents who work long hard hours toiling for their families.

Give them rest.

Be with those who are ill and tired from overwork and disease.

Restore them to health.

Be with mums and dads who dream that life will be better for their children.

May their hopes not be in vain.

Be with all who live fearfully because of violence and war.

Protect them.

Help us to work for justice for the most vulnerable ones in the world.

Help us to stand up and speak out for the defenceless.

In the name of Jesus, our example and our Saviour,

Amen.

Discussion 2. Walk the walk (Sermon 26th October)

Use the Just Start Talking discussion book and complete Session 1 Exercise 1 and Exercise 2a (pages 8 and 9 only)

Ask your group to carefully label their fears and difficulties as they think about talking about Jesus to their friends and family members. Ask them to share actual examples from their past to illustrate these.

Discussion 3. Talk the walk (Sermon 2nd November)

Use the Just Start Talking discussion book and complete Session 1 Exercise 2b and Exercises 3 and 4 (pages 9 to 13).

Discussion 4. Building to last (Sermon 9th November)

Use the Just Start Talking discussion book and complete Session 2 (pages 14 - 19)

Discussion 5. Keep It Simple Stupid: Decoding religious language (Sermon 24th August)

Use the Just Start Talking discussion book and complete Session 3 (pages 20 to 24)

Discussion 6. The promised seed (Sermon 23rd November)

1. What do you think Jesus meant when he said “The time has come (is fulfilled), the kingdom of heaven is near...”
2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:18 - 22. How does God’s trustworthiness both inform and constrain Paul’s preaching and conduct? What do you think Paul means when he says “no matter how many promises God has made they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.” (verse 20).
3. If God is a promise keeping God, how should this be reflected in us as his people? (See Matthew 5:37). What difficulties arise in relationships and in business if our word cannot be trusted?
4. Some people have called Genesis 3:15 the “first gospel”. What justification would they have to make this claim?
6. Paul says in Galatians 3:8 that God “announced the gospel (preached the gospel) in advance to Abraham” in Genesis 12:3. Why do you think he says this? In what ways is God blessing the nations of the world through Jesus?

Discussion 7. The Lamb of God (Sermon 30th November)

1. Read Exodus 12:1-13. What is the role of the sacrificial lamb in the Passover? What does the lamb represent? Why does it have to die? How exactly does its death protect Israel?
2. Why do you think the Israelites are commanded to repeat the passover annually? (See Exodus 12:24-30)
3. What links are there between the passover and the “Last Supper” (Luke 22:7-23)? In what way does this meal look back and forward? How well do you think our celebration of the Lord’s Supper captures this backwards and forwards aspect?
4. In what practical ways does Paul say we should live in response to Jesus’ death as our passover lamb? (see 1 Corinthians 5)
5. How would you respond to someone who says that the “elaborate ceremonies of the church associated with the Lord’s Supper detract from its simple meaning”? What are the practical advantages and disadvantages of celebrating the Lord’s Supper every week as opposed to annually?

6. Imagine you have a friend or family member who comes to church with you as your guest. They do not profess any Christian faith and they ask you should they take part in the Lord's Supper (eating and drinking with you) during the service. How would you answer them?

No discussion question for the week following 7th December.

Your group might like to spend some time praying for our connections with our community through Connect 09 and Jesus all about life outreaches next year. Perhaps your group could plan an activity to which you could invite your friends and neighbours - and where they would have a chance to hear something about Jesus.

Discussion 8. The day of the Lord (Sermon 14th December))

1. List the features of the Day of the Lord from Malachi 4. What factors determine whether this day will be experienced as judgement and punishment or blessing? In what ways is this a fitting way to end the English order of the books in the Old Testament?

2. Malachi 2:17 - 3:5 talks about a messenger who prepares the way for the Lord. If this messenger is John the Baptist - what features of Jesus' ministry illustrate the fulfilment of this prophecy?

3. How would you respond to the person who is angry at God and says "If I could meet God face to face I would give him a piece of my mind"?

4. How do the events of the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 fulfil the promises of Joel 2:28-32. Where has the theme of Judgement associated with the Day of the Lord gone?

5. How would you help someone who is scared by the prospect of God's judgement when they die? What comfort and reassurance could you give them? What grounds would you have for giving this reassurance? What dangers are there in giving false assurance?

6. How would you respond to someone who refuses an invitation to attend church with you because "They are always fear mongering and using fire and brimstone to keep people under control. The church should talk about love and kindness. There is enough negative stuff in the world already."?

Discussion 9. The Lord saves (Sermon 21st December)

1. How would you reply to this criticism of evangelical preaching: “You can’t preach Jesus as a saviour because people don’t think they need saving. A drowning person puts their hand up to ask a lifesaver for help. People aren’t putting their hands up to ask Jesus for help. Preaching Jesus as saviour is not only irrelevant it is immoral.”?

2. Why do you think people often leave out the phrase “on whom his favour rests” from Luke 2:14? What difference does this make to the message delivered by the angels?

3. What features of Jesus’ ministry illustrate those in Isaiah 40:10-11?

4. What encouragement is there in the contrast between people and God’s word in Isaiah 40:7-8. What reasons could you have for choosing this as a reading at a funeral service? How appropriate would it be?

5. According to Peter in Acts 2, what is the one condition that must be fulfilled (by people) before God saves them?

6. Your group has been given the task of designing a postcard that our church will put into the letterbox of all Ryde residents. What could you do to make your card “Cut through” the Christmas clutter? How would you respond to a suggestion that a picture showing Santa being crucified would achieve this aim?