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“But go and learn

what this means:

‘I desire mercy,

not sacrifice.’

For I have not come

to call the righteous,

but sinners.”

Matthew 9:13

Introduction to Term 1

Welcome to 2024 – a year of change as we continue to pursue our goal of knowing Christ and making Him known. Under God, we will be planting a church in Calderwood in the second half of this year, and information meetings will be held this term for those interested in being a part of these plans.

The elders will also be working towards adding further staff at Wollongong, and planning for continued growth. This term we will be studying chapters 8 to 12 of Matthew’s gospel, picking up where we left off last year.

Our vision is that God might grow us to be a church bursting at the seams with mature, gospel-hearted servants of Jesus, from all ages and backgrounds, who are passionate to reach our neighbours for Christ. To that end, we wanted to highlight some key ministries below. These focus on building up our children, starting a new evangelism course in April, and integrating newcomers through our Onboard course.



Like the adults, Kindy to Year 8 will be studying Matthew’s gospel in term 1. We encourage parents to ask their children questions about what they are learning. This way we will all be engaging with the same section of God’s word together and spurring one another on in our faith.



In 2024 we are introducing a new evangelistic course called “**321**”, produced by Glen Scrivener and the team at *Speaklife*, which will be held at our church for the first time after Easter. With this course we hope to share the good news of the gospel whilst letting our guests experience the love and hospitality that a Christian community offers.

Led by the Multiplication team at WBC, this course invites people to see life the way Jesus does. 321 is designed to help people think about God, the world and themselves through immersive videos and thoughtful illustrations.

We know that people will only be saved if God softens hearts and opens blind eyes, so throughout the term 1 we are going to spend time praying for **3** people, **2** times a week, for **1** minute (**321**).

List the names of 3 people you want to pray for and invite to the course:



“Onboard” is a short course that has been developed by WBC staff and our Onboard team for Christians who are considering calling WBC home. At our church we desire that all our members are Onboard with Jesus, Onboard with God’s people, and Onboard with growing disciples at WBC.

The Onboard course is designed to help newcomers get oriented to WBC in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere. Across three sessions our guests learn more about what we believe at WBC, get to know other members, and discover what belonging at WBC will look like. Onboard is the pathway for joining both a home group and serving in a ministry team.

We have such a great culture of welcoming people into our church, and it is an immense blessing to be able to have a clear pathway for our newcomers to follow. If you’re reading this, you are already part of a home group and likely onboard with our vision and mission. This is great because you can now encourage newcomers to participate in this course to work out early on in their journey if WBC is right for them. You can also be praying for this ministry; we hope that God will use Onboard to help people see and know the love of Jesus as they move into the life of our congregation.

How to use or vary the studies

These studies are short (6 questions) and have been designed to be done after the sermon. Each leader has the freedom to add or remove questions or vary the study, so view them as a guide.

Some groups may choose to ignore the questions and use one of the inductive Bible study methods below to construct their own.

Inductive methods for studying the Bible

1. Simple Gospel Exploration Method

Pray and then read the passage through twice and ask:

- a. What did I learn about who Jesus is?
- b. What did I learn about why Jesus came?
- c. How will knowing this affect how I live?

2. Swedish Method

- a. Read the passage aloud.
- b. Each person then spends 5-10 minutes reading back over the passage on their own, noting down three things:



a. anything that shines out in the passage and sparks interest; it can be something important, or something that particularly strikes the reader.



b. anything that is hard to understand; something that the reader would like to ask the author about.



c. anything that applies personally to the reader's life.

3. C.O.M.A Method

C.O.M.A stands for: Context-Observation-Meaning-Application.

Step 1: Read the passage aloud.

Step 2: Ask some context questions of the text:

- What sort of writing is this? (A letter, a narrative, a poem?)
- Are there any clues about the circumstances?
- What has happened so far?

Step 3: Ask some observation questions of the text:

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text?
- What is the main point or points?
- What surprises are there?
- What are the key words?
- What words or ideas are repeated?

Step 4: Ask some meaning questions of the text:

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach us about God?
- How could we sum up this passage in our own words?

Step 5: Ask some application questions of the text:

- How does this passage challenge my understanding?
- Is there some attitude I need to change?
- How does this passage call on me to change the way I live?

Step 6: Pray together about what you have learned.

Sermon: Matthew 8:1-17

4th February

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 8:1-17

Week 1

Jesus has just given the 'Sermon on the Mount.' "The crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority" (7:28-29).

Read Matthew 8:1-17

1. What evidence is there in this passage of the authority of Jesus' words?
2. Jesus shows compassion to those who are sick (v1-3, 13, 15-16), and this will be a theme in Matthew 8-12 (eg. 9:35-36). What reason is given to explain his actions (v17)?
3. To whom do you have difficulty showing compassion? How could you adjust your perspective so that showing compassion becomes easier?

4. What did Jesus marvel at in verse 10? How is this challenging to your faith?

5. What is Jesus explaining about his kingdom in verse 11 and 12, and why would this have been shocking to his first hearers?

6. How can we make sure we are hoping for and pursuing this true vision of Jesus' Kingdom?

Pray

Pray that we will be sharing the gospel so that Jesus might draw more Gentiles and Jews into his kingdom. Pray also for your three friends for one minute (see the introduction to term 1).

Sermon: Matthew 8:18-34

11th February

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 8:18-34

Week 2

Read Matthew 8:18-34

1. In verse 20 we read: ‘...but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.’
 - a. Why is this somewhat surprising?

 - b. What attitude should Jesus’ disciples have to where they live?

2. “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead” (8:22).
 - a. What does this command tell us about following Jesus?

 - b. What relationships do you have that may challenge the priority of following Jesus? What should you do about them?

3. What else do we learn in this section about what it means to follow Jesus? (e.g. 8:26.)

4. The disciples ask the question in 8:27, “What sort of man is this...?” How would your non-Christian family, friends or work colleagues answer this question?

5. How do the accounts of Jesus calming the storm and healing the demon-possessed men help answer the question of Christ’s identity?

Pray

Pray that you would have faith in Jesus and be prepared to give priority to following him ahead of anyone else. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute (see the introduction to term 1).

Sermon: Matthew 9:1-34

18th February

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Study 3: Matthew 9:1-34

Week 3

1. What types of people are regarded as morally sick in our society? What solutions are offered for their weaknesses?

Read Matthew 9:1-34

2. There are several responses to Jesus' authority in this passage, some of them negative (v3, 11, 14, 31, 34). What is driving this opposition?
3. What is the nature of the positive responses to Christ's authority (v8, 9, 21-22, 26, 33)?

4. How does Christ's central statement in the chapter (v12-13) address the critical responses, and highlight the focus of his ministry?

5. In the previous chapter, the people of the Gadarenes pleaded with Jesus to leave their region (8:34). How do people today respond in a similar way?

6. How can we convey humanity's 'sin-sickness' to our non-Christian contacts in a way that helps them see their need for Jesus?

Pray

Pray that we would see our need as sinners who Jesus came to call. Pray for one friend who does not see their need for Jesus. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute.

Sermon: Matthew 9:35-10:23

25th February

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 9:35-10:23

Week 4

1. When a group of people are starting a new project, why is it important to have reasonable expectations?

Read Matthew 9:35-10:23

2. What task is given to the disciples (10:5-8) and how does Jesus frame it (10:9-15)?

3. What warnings does Jesus give the disciples (10:16-23)?

4. What does the task have to do with Christ's statement at the end of chapter 9?

5. If we are to fulfil the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20), how are we to pray (9:38), and speak and act?

6. Why should we to count the cost of working in the Lord's harvest field and still share the good news (e.g. 10:22)?

Pray

Give thanks for those who presented the gospel to you, and ask the Lord to send out workers into his harvest field where you are. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute.

Sermon: Matthew 10:24-42

3rd March

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 10:24-42

Week 5

1. Does anything make you fearful? If so, how do you deal with that fear?

Read Matthew 10:24-42

2. What should followers of Jesus expect according to verses 24 and 25?

3. Why should disciples of Christ not be afraid?

4. In what way does Jesus bring a sword rather than peace?

5. What does taking up our cross involve?

6. What might loving our family more than Christ look like in daily life, and how would we correct this?

Pray

Give thanks that true fear or reverence for God will result in freedom from fear. Pray for: a willingness to always acknowledge Jesus before others, and strength to stand by his servants and welcome his followers. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute.

Sermon: Matthew 11:1-24

10th March

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 11:1-24

Week 6

1. Do you know someone who has doubts about Jesus? If so, what are they, and how would you address them?

Read Matthew 11:1-24

2. How did Jesus answer the doubts of John the Baptist and his disciples (cf. Isaiah 35:3-6, 61:1)?

3. Have you faced doubts about Jesus at any point? If so, how were they answered?

4. What does it mean that John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come (v14, cf. Malachi 3:1, 4:5-6)?

5. How did Christ's generation respond to John the Baptist and to Christ himself, and what are the consequences (v18-24)?

6. What criticisms do our generation offer in assessing Jesus?

Pray

Pray for anyone you know who may be struggling with doubts about Jesus, that they would be willing to hear his word and respond in repentance and faith. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute.

Sermon: Matthew 11:25-12:21

17th March

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 11:25-12:21

Week 7

1. What would our society recommend for true rest?

Read Matthew 11:25-12:21

2. What teaching does Jesus give regarding rest, and what is his promise (v28-30)?

3. Why do we often resist the offer to take on his yoke, and how might we overcome this?

4. Jesus says that he and his disciples are not breaking the Sabbath. What have the Pharisees missed in their thinking (1 Sam. 21:1-9; Hosea 6:6)?

5. How are we to treat the Sabbath today (Mark 2:27; Col.2:16-17)?

6. How does Christ's compassion on the sick, whether on a Sabbath or otherwise, fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah 42:1-3 (v15-21)?

Pray

Give thanks for the fact that Jesus offers rest and freedom, and pray for loved ones who are yet to receive this. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute.

Sermon: Matthew 12:22-50

24th March

Reflect

What impacted you most in this week's passage? How can you apply this truth in your life?

Home Group: Matthew 12:22-50

Week 8

Read Matthew 12:22-50

1. How does Jesus answer the Pharisees' charge that he is driving out demons by the power of Satan (v22-29)?
2. Jesus infers that the Pharisees had blasphemed or spoken against the Holy Spirit. How had they done this?
3. Sometimes a believer is worried that they have committed an unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. Why is it unlikely that they have, if they hold such a concern?

4. What is the spiritual connection between our heart and our mouth (v33-37), and how can we grow in godliness in this area?

5. The Pharisees wrongly asked for a sign (v38-42). How would you respond to someone who wanted a sign in order to believe in Jesus?

6. How should Jesus' words in verses 46 to 50 shape our thinking about family relationships and our spiritual family?

Pray

Pray that our words would not condemn us but yield good fruit, and show that we follow Jesus, the one greater than Jonah and Solomon. Pray also for three non-Christian friends for one minute.

Home Group: Introduction to 3-2-1

Week 9

We hope that leading up to Easter 2024, you have been prayerfully thinking about the people that you would like to invite to the course. We would like to give you a sample of the video and the kind of discussion questions in this course, so we have included the link to the first episode with this QR code or link:

<https://youtu.be/sXt34box2fQ>



Please watch this episode with your Home Group members and discuss the following questions.

Episode 1:

1. Did the idea of the space station make sense to you as a picture of life? What stood out to you?
2. Who do you relate to most: Hope? Doc? Sasha? Why?
3. If you were there, how would you react to the entrance of that fourth person?

Have you picked up invitations to the course yet? When are you planning to invite your 3 contacts? Spend time praying for one another as you invite people in the coming weeks.