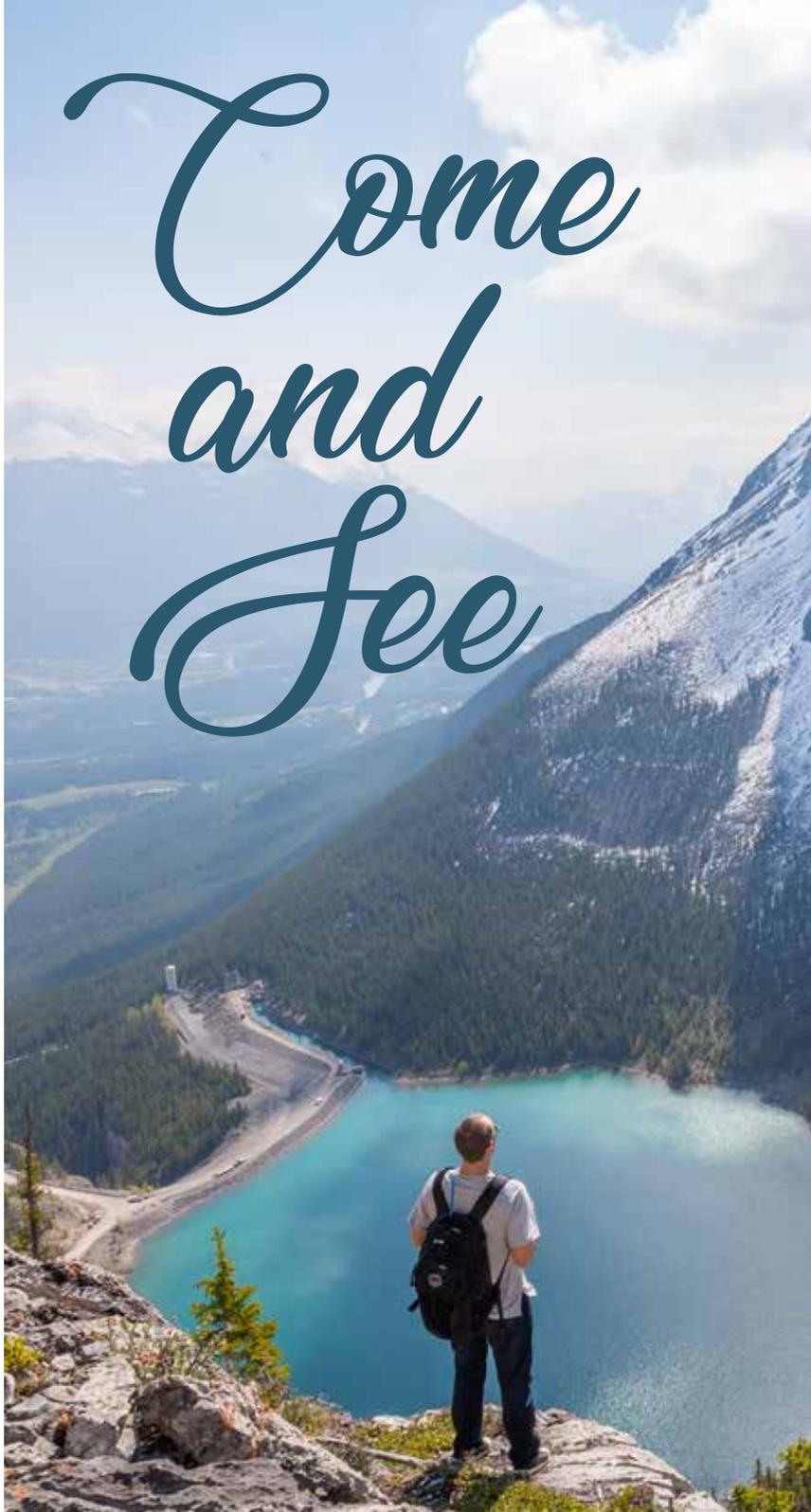


Six Week Series to Discover More
Participants' Booklet

*Come
and
See*





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Introduction

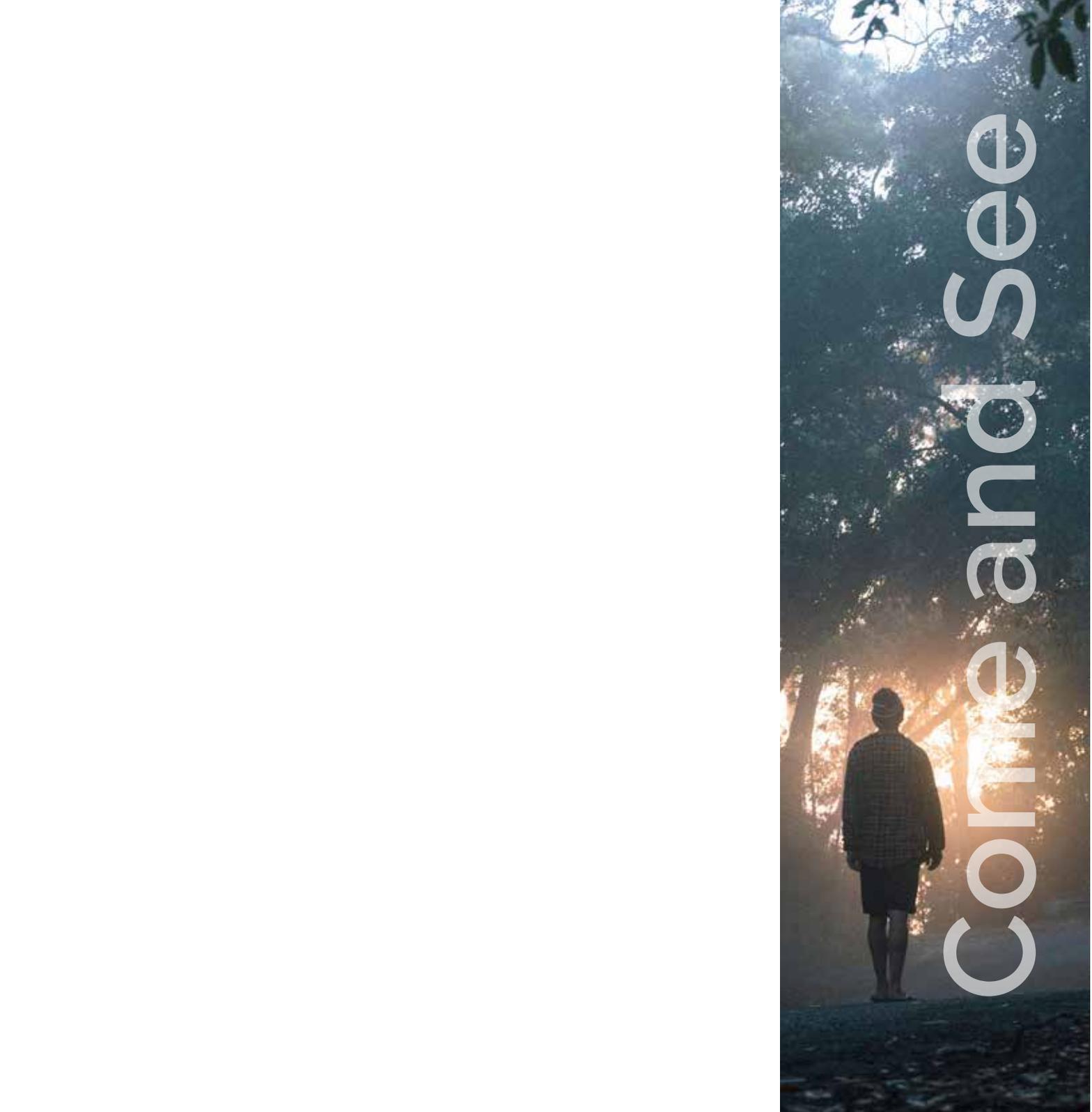
Welcome to Come and See (CAS)! - a six week course that is designed to introduce you to Jesus Christ, the inspiration of millions of people around the world. You will probably have heard his name, and might have some idea of his life and teachings, and of his death on a Roman cross. You may know the extraordinary claim of his followers that he rose from the grave after three days. Perhaps you know someone who speaks of having a relationship with Jesus today, which may seem an odd idea.

Whatever your level of knowledge, interest or experience, we are really glad you are here!

Come and See tells the story of Jesus and invites you to meet him: as a leader, teacher, healer, saviour, death-defying Lord and ever present God. Each week will focus on one of these themes, taking you into Jesus' story and giving you plenty of room to listen, learn and make your own response. The approach we take is open and interactive - there are no long talks and there is plenty of room for discussion. Our aim is to give people room to journey.

It may be that you are a follower of Jesus, and would like to learn more. Perhaps you long for a deeper encounter or to enter more fully into the adventure that Jesus calls his followers to. It may be that you are here to learn to share your faith more confidently with others.

Whatever brings you here, may you find what your heart longs for and the life you were made for.



Come and See

SESSION 1: INSPIRED Jesus the Way

- Icebreaker
- Setting the Scene
- The Story: Mark 1:1-20 & 2: 13-17
- Discussion
- Summing up - challenge
- Life Story
- Time to reflect
- Where next?

Discuss

- What has caught your interest in these stories?
- What do we learn about Jesus from them?
- What do you think it means to follow Jesus today?

Jesus said:

*"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life - no one comes to the Father except through me."
John 14: 6*

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
Matthew 11: 28-30*

Songwriters

"There is a joy in the journey;

There's a light we can love on the way,
There is a wonder and wildness to life
And freedom for those who obey.

"And all those who seek it shall find it -
A pardon for all who believe
Hope for the hopeless
And sight for the blind."

(From Joy in the journey,
by Michael Card)

Prayer Ideas

What do you most long for?

Jesus, could you really be calling me too, to follow you? I only begin to know what this means, but find that my heart wants to say, 'Yes.' So here I am, with so much to learn, asking you to lead me...

Can it be True?

There is a great character in one of the gospels called Nathanael (John 1: 43-51). When he is told about Jesus of Nazareth, by his friend, Philip, he responds,

'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?'

Philip replies,

'Come and See.'

That is the invitation of this six-week course: **'Come and See!**
Take a good look at this Jesus Christ, and decide for yourself...

Reasons to Believe

Part 1

Near the start of this session you were asked to imagine some scenes - a river running through a desert, and a vast lake. These were not fictional, but real. They exist today: the river Jordan is on any map of Israel, as is Lake Galilee - known today as Yam Kenneret.

But what about Jesus?

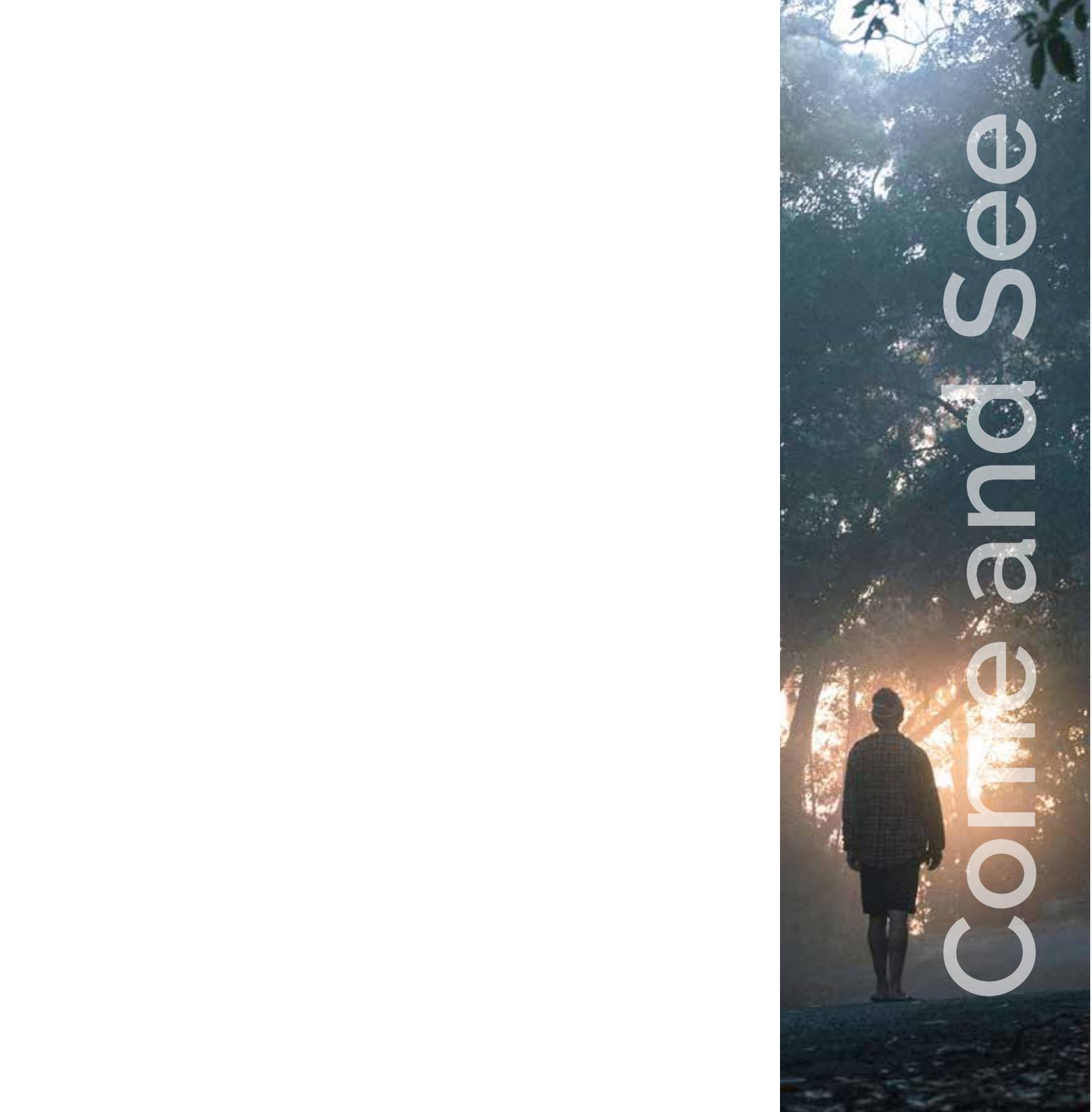
How do we know he existed?

We can be confident of this because he gets a mention in a number of other very ancient books. There was a very famous Jewish Historian, **Josephus**, who lived in the first century. He refers to Jesus as **a reputed miracle worker and teacher who attracted a considerable following and was executed under Pontius Pilate (a Roman Governor).**

There was a Roman Historian, Tacitus, who gives a record of Jesus' execution **by order of Pontius Pilate in Judaea in the reign of Tiberius.**

These brief references tally with the historical details given in the New Testament and establish that Jesus lived, had a popular following and was executed under Rome. He can no more be dismissed as the figment of someone's imagination than Julius Caesar or Henry VIII!

Notes



Come and See

SESSION 2: HOW SHALL WE LIVE? Jesus the Teacher

- Setting the Scene
- Mustard Seed and Yeast
- Reading: Luke 6: 27-42
- Discussion
- Life Story
- Summing up
- Reflection

Discuss

Love your enemies...do good to those who curse you... do not judge... forgive...

- How much of this do we see today?
- Can you think of some examples?
- Can we really live this way?
- What might get in the way?

Look at the two parables of Jesus in the Reflection pages, entitled 'Two men went to pray...' and 'Foundations'.

- How do these help us respond to Jesus' teaching?
- How might you sum up the meaning/message of each story?
- Which one do you find the most challenging, and why?

Jesus said:

"LOVE your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you... Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven..."
Luke 6: 27-31 & 37

Two men went to pray...

"To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like all other men - robbers, evildoers, adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18 v 9-14

Prayer Ideas

What holds you back from turning to God or drawing closer to him?

What is the prayer of your heart today?

Jesus, your teachings shine like a search-light into my heart. I want to hide, but then I remember how you said you had come for sinners - sinners like me. I can only come as I am - you know that. So, I come. I need you to teach me how to live. I need you to change my heart.

Foundations

Jesus said:

"I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Matthew 7:24-27

Reasons to Believe

Part 2

There can be little doubting that Jesus existed - but can we trust the Gospels as an accurate record of his life?

Have a look at the beginning of Luke's gospel:

"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Luke 1: 1-4

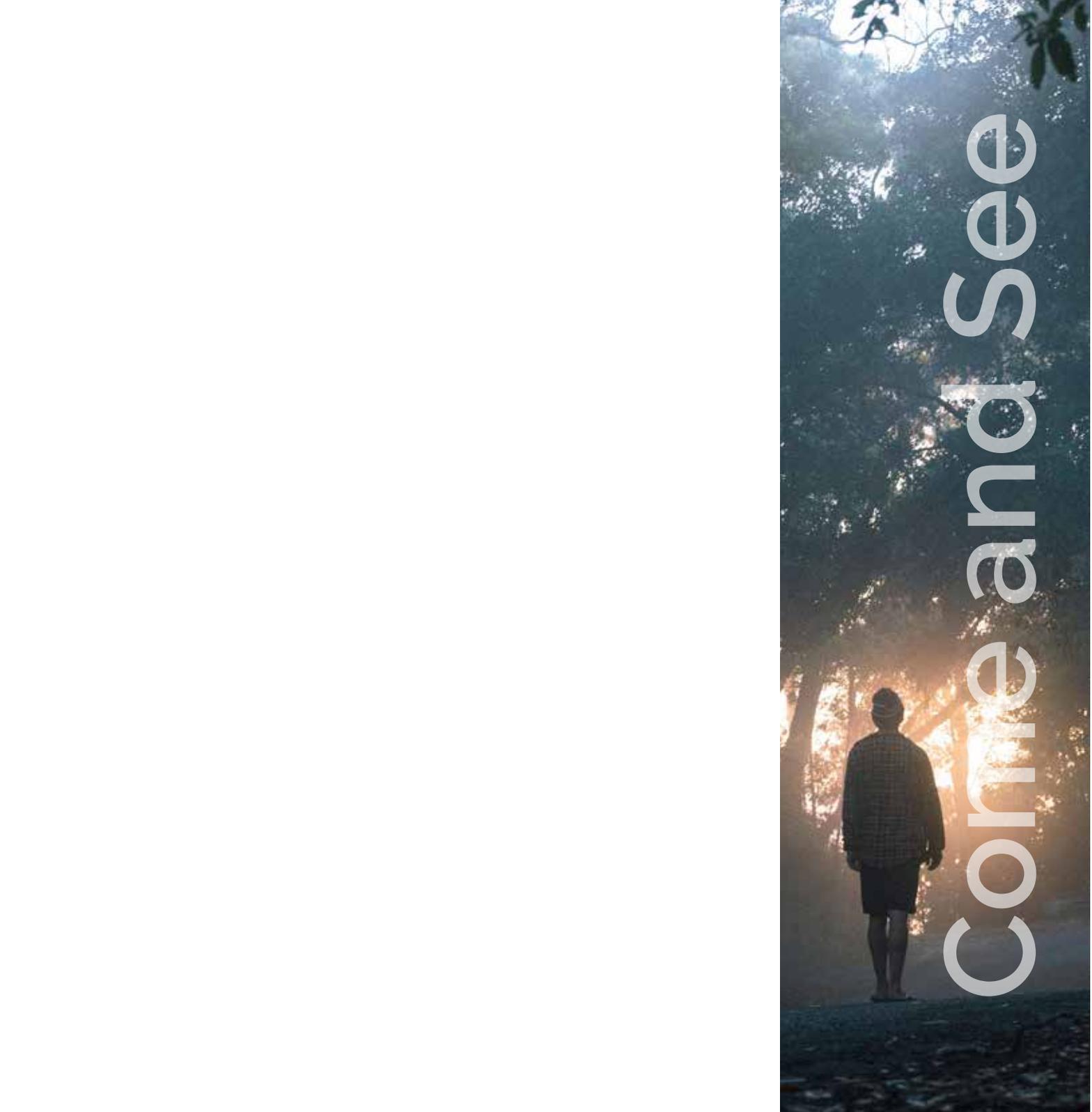
What is Luke claiming about his account?

What is your reaction to his claims?

"What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew, became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches. Again he asked, "What shall I compare the Kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough"

Luke 13: 18-21.

Notes



Come and See

SESSION 3: WELLBEING Jesus the Healer

- Introduction
- Setting the Scene: In through the Roof
- Reading: Luke 5: 17-26
- Discussion
- Life Story
- Summing up & Challenge
- Reflection & Prayer
- Reasons to Believe

Discuss

- Share your thoughts/reactions to this story, including any questions it provokes.
- Why do you think Jesus speaks of forgiveness to a paralysed man?
- Why are the Pharisees and teachers of the law offended at this?
- Does Jesus heal today? Share experiences.
- What does the story teach us about Jesus? What is your response?

Jesus said:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
Because he has anointed me
To preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners
And recovery of sight for the blind,
To release the oppressed,

To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."
Luke 4: 18-19*

When Jesus saw their faith...

What did Jesus see? Four men determined to get their friend to Jesus. There was no complicated theology here, just a raw belief that here was someone who could help – 'if we can get him to this man, just maybe he can do something!' This may help us in our own coming to Christ, aware, perhaps of our own brokenness – in body, mind or spirit – we may feel that we understand so little of the Christian faith, yet are drawn to the compassion of Jesus in the story today.

Act on your faith – for your own needs, or those of others.

Prayer Ideas

Imagine yourself in that great crowd. After the healing of the man in the stretcher, the crowds slowly begin to dwindle. You are lingering for a while, wondering if Jesus could know as much about your heart as he did the crippled man. Then, to your surprise, you realise that he is looking straight at you. You want to turn away but are transfixed by his gaze, which seems to say, **"what about you, what would you like me to do for you?"**

Think about this question.

- In what ways do you know brokenness?
- What wounds do you carry?
- What is your hearts reply?

Take time with this and, if you can, pray your answer...

Spirit of the Living God, present with us now, enter you, body mind and spirit, and heal you of all that harms you.

Reasons to Believe

Part 3

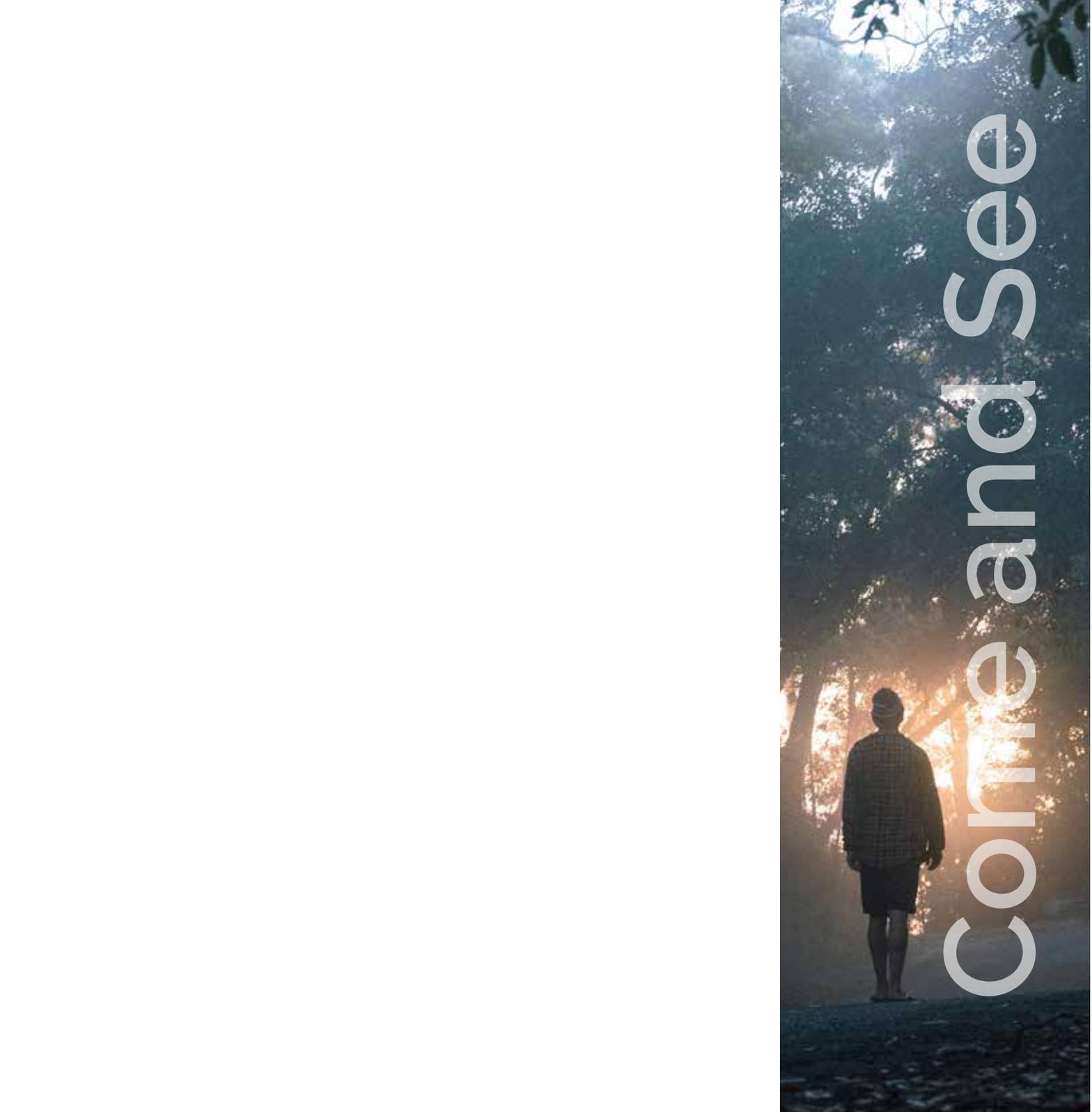
At the beginning of his gospel Luke refers to the eye-witnesses and servants of the word who had handed down the stories and teachings of Jesus. Before the gospels were written, these stories would have been told and retold in the many Christian communities that sprang up after Jesus' death and resurrection, committed to memory, with some parts put on papyrus (early form of paper). The gospel writers brought these together as a whole story and these were copied and read in the churches of the Roman world. Over the years hundreds and hundreds of copies were made by hand and we have many old copies today, though no originals.

Can we trust the memories of those first eye-witnesses and early Christian communities, and the copying skills of later generations?

Yes, people of ancient cultures were much more used to committing information to memory than we are. Methods of recording and storing information were very cumbersome and the means harder to come by, so people used their heads! There are many examples ancient and modern of people being able to remember volumes of information – it is a matter of training and practice. Furthermore, the stories of Jesus were vital to the life of these communities – great care would have been taken to guard the traditions

that were the life-blood of the church. As for the copying skills of scribes – it was almost an obsession to get it right, and the success of their endeavours is shown in the amazing correlation of the many copies that have come down to us through the centuries.

Notes



Come and See

SESSION 4: RESCUE

Jesus means Saviour

- Getting Started: Stories that inspire
- The hero, the villain and the beloved
- Setting the scene: Wilderness to Cross
- Reading/Video: Luke 22:39 – 23:56
- Discussion
- Summing up
- Life story
- Reflection
- Reasons to Believe

Discuss

- Share your reactions to what you have seen/heard
- What human weaknesses are at play in the story of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion? Think of the various characters in the story to answer this.
- There is an old negro spiritual that asks 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?' What do these words suggest about Jesus' death?
- As he hangs on the cross, Jesus prays, 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.' How do you react to this? Was this a prayer only for those who violently took his life?

Songwriters

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns composed so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of Nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

(Isaac Watts)

Prayer Ideas

What is the prayer of your heart today?

*Jesus, at your cross all is revealed –
I come to know my sin...*

*Jesus, at your cross you are the victim of
fear, envy, cowardice, greed and hatred
– you know what is to be human and to
suffer at the hands of men. You know the
terrible darkness of abandonment.*

*Jesus, at your cross, you pray for
forgiveness for those who hurt you. In your
prayer there is hope for a lost world.*

I need forgiveness.

*I need you to rescue my heart, and bring
healing where it has been damaged.*

I have sinned and been sinned against.

Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.

Amen

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in
this: while we were still sinners,
Christ died for us"
Romans 5: 8*

Reasons to Believe

Part 4

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.

Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. "

These words were written hundreds of years before Jesus was even born. They are found in the book of Isaiah, chapter 53. There are other parts of the Old Testament that look forward to the coming of God's Messiah (rescuer) and often these predict some aspect of the story of Jesus – such as where he was to be born and the manner of his dying. The gospel writers often quote from these passages to show how Jesus fulfills the visions of the prophets of old.

Notes



Come and See

SESSION 5: LIFE

Jesus, Risen Lord

- Thinking back to last time
- Reading: Luke 24: 1-12
- Nonsense?
- Reading: Luke 24: 13-53
- Discussion
- Reasons to Believe
- Life Story
- Reflection

Discuss

- As always, take some time to share your immediate responses/questions.
- What mixture of reactions/emotions do we see in the characters of the story to meeting Jesus?
- Imagine what it was like for the women and the disciples seeing Jesus alive again. How do you think you would have reacted/felt? What might you have said or done?
- Do you find yourself convinced by what you have heard, or do questions remain?



What does it all mean?

1. The Resurrection shows God the Father's acceptance of the offering of the Son. A perfect sacrifice of love, for the forgiveness of our sins.
2. It is also the turning of the tables on the forces of evil - now defeated, for the one they tried to destroy is risen and ascended into heaven. The Bible says, His name is above all other names - which means that he is the highest authority in the Universe (God's own authority). One day every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess that He is LORD.
3. We are given his authority and the power to live the life he calls us to. Power to live. For those who die to self, experience the power of Christ's resurrection in their lives
4. We have a hope for the future: This life is not all there is. Jesus is raised from the dead and we, who trust and follow him, will be raised too. Our future is revealed - life beyond this life; life after death. The Christian community holds this hope: we too shall be raised.

Prayer Ideas

Lord, I need more than forgiveness, I need the power to change - to live the way you want me to. Jesus, risen LORD, you have overcome sin and death and every evil power. Be the strength of my life and my hope for the life to come. Amen.

*"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5: 6-8*

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."
Philippians 3: 10*

Reasons to Believe

Part 5

1 An empty tomb

2 Jesus' appearances to his disciples.

Luke makes it clear that these were not ghostly appearances - Jesus invites the disciples to touch his wounds, and he eats in front of them. Paul says that more than 500 people saw the risen Jesus, many of whom were still alive as he was writing (1 Corinthians 15: 3-7). If it had been only one or two, we might conclude that they were 'seeing things,' but there are too many witnesses at different times and places to make such a claim. And if these people simply made it up, this would make for an enormous web of deceit.

3 The change in the disciples!

They go from frightened, demoralized, men and women, hidden away behind locked doors, to a vibrant, joyful community, boldly proclaiming that Jesus has risen from the dead. This community, the Church, spreads like wild-fire across the Roman World. Millions of people claim to know him today. How do we explain this? Only the resurrection explains it.

Notes



Come and See

SESSION 6: PRESENCE

- Life Giving SPIRIT

- Way in
- A Promised Gift
- Story: Acts 2:1-16, 22-34 & 36-47
- Discussion
- What does the Spirit do?
- How can I be filled?
- Life stories
- Time to reflect
- Opportunity for prayer

Discuss

- Share your reactions to this story – including any questions it provokes
- Read the following passages together. Give some time after each one to capture what is being taught about the work/role of the Spirit (What does he do in our lives?)

Romans 8: 12-17

Galatians 5:22-26

1 Corinthians 12:11



An Act of Commitment

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven..."
Matthew 5:3*

**Father God, maker of all,
I come to you in need.
I have sinned against you and against
others,
In word, in thought and deed.**

*Pause to bring to mind the things you want to
say sorry for and turn from...*

**Father God, lover of all,
You sent your Son to rescue us:
To live and die and rise again,
So that we might come home to you.**

Jesus Christ, Son of God,
You show us the way to the Father.
I choose to follow you.
Lead me in love.

Jesus, Teacher,
Show me how to live.
Healer of the broken –
Make me whole.

Jesus, Saviour, you have died for us;
You have given your life as a sacrifice,
So that we might be forgiven.
Lord, forgive me.

I turn to Christ
I repent of my sins
I renounce evil.

*Assurance of forgiveness,
using 1 John 1:8-8*

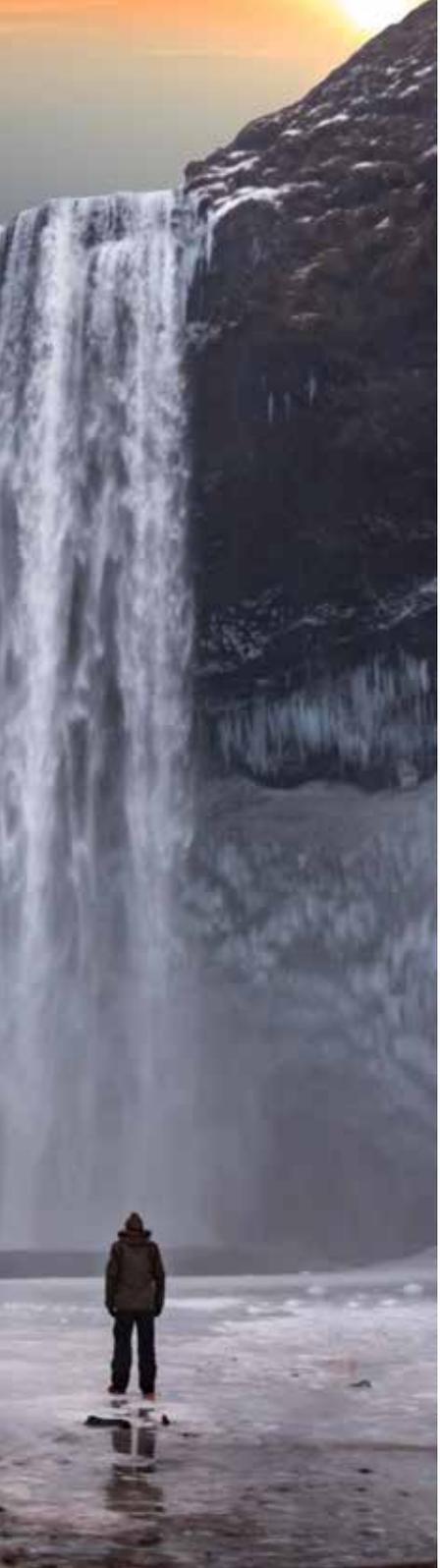
Jesus, you are risen from death,
The grave could not hold you!
The powers of darkness are defeated.
Risen Lord, let me share in your victory.
Set me free to live for you.

**Lord Jesus, you promised to send your
Spirit
Upon your waiting disciples.
You said you would come to us
And not leave us as orphans...**

Holy Spirit, giver of life,
Bring to me the fullness of Jesus.
Come to me and fill me.
Be the assurance of my heart.
Be the power of my life.
Come Holy Spirit...

Laying on of hands...

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
One God in perfect unity.
Embrace us,
Heal us,
Make us ONE.
Send us, together, into the
world to serve you... AMEN.**



A Thirsty Heart

*"O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you,
my body longs for you,
in a dry and weary land
where there is no water"
Psalm 63:1*

Jesus Said:

*"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find; knock and the door
will be opened to you. For everyone who asks
receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who
knocks the door will be opened.*

*Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a
fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he
asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you
then, though you are evil, know how to give
good gifts to your children, how much more
will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to
those who ask him!"
Luke 11: 11-13*

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