

Getting to Grips with

God

How our understanding of God changes everything

Part 2: Following the Son

Session #1 Why Jesus changes everything

"... For this God is our God..." – Psalm 48v 14

Sladebrook Evangelical Church

www.sladebrook.org.uk

Introduction and Aim of this Teaching Series:

This series of Sunday morning talks introduces us to the magnificent doctrine of God. Often trivialised (and certainly simplified) Christian faith and maturity depends on an ever-increasing appreciation of who God is and what He has done. As well as “*getting to grips with God*” we will also attempt to loosen our grip on what God is not, dispelling some commonly held misunderstandings. It is hoped that with Scripture as our guide and with the Holy Spirit’s help, we will discover more about the God we worship and seek to apply this knowledge in our daily Christian walk and witness.

Subject in this series include:

- Honouring God the Father (September)
 - *Who God is (and isn't) – Reality, Trinity and revelation of God/unhelpful stereotypes*
 - *God in God's own words – biblical descriptions of God/Who He is/what He does*
 - *Finding the Father's Heart – understanding just how much God loves us, and how that should be experienced*

- Following God the Son (October)
 - *Why Jesus changes everything for everyone*
 - *Finding acceptance in Christ – what Jesus has brought us into: forgiveness/acceptance/purpose/unconditional love/grace*
 - *The current role/ future prospects of Jesus and His church*

- Welcoming God the Spirit (November)
 - *Who is the Holy Spirit? Confusions and clarifications regarding the Holy Spirit*
 - *What does He do? The ministries and manifestations of the Spirit*
 - *How should He work in me? The role of the Spirit in the life of the believer*

Getting to Grips with God: *Why Jesus changes everything*

So far in these studies we have looked at who God is not, unpicking some of the more familiar, but unhelpful images that people have of God. We have also considered how Scripture describes God. What we have seen is surprising: God transcends even the noblest image we could conceive of and yet His character and exploits reveal Him as glorious, good and gracious. Ultimately, God is revealed as “Abba Father” a radical term that Jesus first used in prayer and Paul also reinforced, exhorting Christians that when addressing the Almighty: “... you received the Spirit of son-ship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8v 15) Unlike the harsh caricatures of a removed, unknowable figure, that leaves us in uncertainty, God is revealed as relational, even personal to those who call upon Him from sincere hearts.

“Honouring the Father” is coming to terms with who God actually is: Not some fickle deity we need to appease, or even the “god” many Christians project as an extension of their own theological preference. No. God is God, on His terms not ours: Magnificently holy and therefore to be revered, yet disarmingly gracious and intimately involved in human affairs. It is time to discard dire doctrines that peddle half-truths! (As if He were impressed by the way we dress, act or speak!) Instead, we are to seek after the God of the Bible: The One who, like the “prodigal father” of Luke 15, seeks the lost and undeserving ones who realise not only their own foolishness and sin, but run to the Father’s outstretched arms, which drip with grace and openly invite us to come home to receive His love and blessing despite ourselves.

Through Creation, (Psalm 19v 1), Conscience (Genesis 3v 7) and ultimately Christ (Hebrews 1v 1) God speaks. However, the final, essential element of this self-revelation is Jesus: The pinnacle of God’s purposes come to fulfilment in Christ and change everything for us. As The Father says of His own dear Son, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!” (Matthew 17v 5) We would do well to listen in the weeks ahead and discover just what Christ has done, how it changes everything and why we should start “Following the Son.”

Read: John Chapter 1 Verses 1-18 & Hebrews Chapter 1 verse 1

(Also: **Psalm 22; Isaiah 9 6-7; Luke 24v 27; John 14v 5-14; Acts 8v 30-35;** for some more references about the first coming of Christ)

How does Jesus change everything?

Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God. He not only reveals the Father's purposes, He fulfils them, allowing us to enjoy God's blessing.

1. PROPHET: Jesus Proclaims the Word of God (Acts 3v 22-23)

The prophets heralded the message of God, so Christ comes as Prophet: He is The Word, come to both proclaim and fulfil all that God has promised.

2. PRIEST: Jesus Presents the perfect offering to God (Heb. 4v14-16)

The priest would offer sacrifices, for himself and on behalf of the nation. Christ, our great High Priest presents a perfect sacrifice for us to the Father.

3. KING: Jesus Prevails over evil and sin as God (Jeremiah 23v 5-6)

Kings led in battle to protect their honour, their people and their right to rule. Jesus fought for us at Calvary and conquered all evil as King of Kings.

Following the Son:

Questions:

- *What do you know about Jesus Christ? List the facts.*
- *Do you personally know Jesus Christ? (What's the difference?)*
- *How does that relationship look in practice?*
- *If someone asked you, what difference would you say He makes:*
 - *In your life?*
 - *In this world?*
 - *In the future?*
- *Jesus invites us to "follow me..." (Luke 9v 23) How do you do this?*
- *If Jesus willingly went to the cross to die and Paul also encourages a similar mentality, (Galatians 2v 20) what does it mean to take up the cross daily and follow Christ? Where do you count the cost?*
- *What changes do you need to make for this to be more clearly seen?*

Response:

- ***Spend some time praying and bring your life before The Father. Are you really following the Son? If you sense God's peace, recommit yourself to Him and give thanks for His grace at work in your life. If however, you feel conviction, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sinful compromise. Confess what needs to go/change, be assured of God's grace and commit to following Christ afresh.***