

Getting to Grips with

God

How our understanding of God changes everything

Part 2: Following the Son

Session #2 Finding acceptance in Christ

“... 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: *Finding acceptance in Christ*

The Gospel, is the message mankind was meant to hear. After all, everyone who has ever lived is implicated! “For God so loved the world...” (John 3v 16) It is Divine communication from God Himself proclaiming that, despite ourselves and the desperate state of things on planet earth, there is hope. Help is at hand, not in the form of some cosmic rule book offering an escape route for the exceptional, but rather from God Himself. It is God initiating, propelling and fulfilling His Divine purpose to restore man to Himself. We cannot look to ourselves, (people wallowing in mud cannot clean each other up) but rather to the One who has come to do for us what we simply could not do. Jesus shone this good news light into the darkness of this world, offering life to the dead and a vision of heaven so compelling that even the blindest eyes could see what God is really like and what He has done.

Jesus revealed the heart of God: He showed us what God is like, what He expects and also what He offers. He calls us to follow and find out! Once we take that first spiritual step, we become the glad recipients of God’s life changing grace. We can surrender all inferior gods for the real thing, enjoy life as children of the living God and embark on a relationship/journey following Christ that ultimately leads us into His eternal, paradise presence.

Finding acceptance in Christ is to understand and embrace what this grace gift actually offers. As we commence a life of supernatural change, rooted in relationship with Jesus, we start to appreciate what He has brought us out of and begin to anticipate what He has also brought us into. According to Paul, we are (Present tense) “accepted in the beloved.” (Ephesians 1v 6) The Greek word here for “accepted” is the same as in Luke 1v 28, where the angel Gabriel tells Mary she is “highly favoured” (these are the only two times this word is used in the New Testament) God already finds favour in His children! Do you know and experience it? God’s love, peace, forgiveness and purpose are present realities designed to propel every Christian into a life of blessing now as well as in the future.

Read: Luke Chapter 4 Verses 14-22 & Ephesians Chapter 1 verse 3-14

(Also: John 10v 10; John 15v 15; Romans 8v 1; Corinthians 5v 17; Colossians 3v 1-3; 1 Peter 2v 9; 1 John 3v 1-2 for some more references about what Christ has done and how it changes us in God’s sight.)

Finding acceptance in Christ

The only way to be right with God and understand ourselves is to come to Christ. He alone has the power to redeem, restore and reconcile us to God.

1. Changing Position: Come to me

"... I will give you rest." - Matthew 11v 28-29

Life in Christ is the first essential step (Colossians 1v 13-14)

2. Changing Purpose: Follow me

"... I will make you fishers of men." - Matthew 4v 19

Life for Christ is the ongoing daily walk (Colossians 2v 6-7 & v9-10)

3. Changing Prospects: Wait for me

"I will come back and take you to be with me..." - John 14v 1-3

Life with Christ is the glorious future prospect (Colossians 3v 1-4)

Following the Son:

Questions:

- ***How do you think God feels about you?*** Do you feel "highly favoured"?
- ***Have you found acceptance in Christ?*** When/how did that happen?
- ***How do you feel about Jesus?*** Try and put your feelings into words.
- ***When did you last share your testimony?*** How reliant is it on past events/present events?
- ***Attempt this week to share it*** with another Christian and with one non-Christian. What will be your struggles/ challenges in doing this?
- ***How fresh does your story sound?*** (How fresh does Gospel grace feel in your life?) How can we stay "fresh" as Christians?
- ***What do you think about standing before God on judgement day?*** Does the prospect alarm you or motivate you? ***What does this say about your understanding of the Gospel?***

Response:

- ***Think about your position, purpose and prospects in Christ.*** How clear are you on each of these as concepts in your life? Think of some ways in which each of these areas can galvanise your faith and continue to nurture your growth as a follower of Christ.