

Bible Study #2

One Message

Introduction:

Last month we commenced our study of the International Vision Plan and what it means for us to be one in our mission. How have you been going in being an effective disciple of Jesus? Perhaps this month's study will help you further as we consider the important message that God has given us to share. It is this message that lies at the heart of our mission into the world of the hurting, broken, lonely, dispossessed and lost. If we are to reach them by all means and be truly effective in our witness and ministry, then our mission and our message have to work together in partnership. But for that to happen, we need to understand the message and so our focus this month is:

One Message

With the transforming message of Jesus, bringing freedom, hope and life

We will:

communicate Christ unashamedly
reaffirm our belief in transformation
evangelise and disciple effectively
provide quality teaching resources

How does it all fit together?

1. What is the transforming message?

We live in a world that is constantly seeking to understand and to be understood. Really we are no different to those we read of in scripture when it comes to the depth of our desire for this. Many sought to understand the message that Jesus spoke of because it was so different to what they understood or had learned. For some, it was very threatening indeed. But the message really is quite simple in its truth – Jesus gives eternal life to anyone who trusts and believes in him.

Read *John 1:1–14*
John 3:16–18
John 10:7–10

The message is clear and life transforming. Jesus does not ask us to behave in order to be saved but to believe.

For reflection:

- In John 1:1–14, what are the four things essential to human life that Jesus says he is?
- What has Jesus shown you through these verses?
- How would you explain to someone the transforming message of Jesus?

2. How is the message to be shared?

This is the message that we need to share but we cannot do this with meekness. We need to share the message boldly and unashamedly. No-one understands this more than the Apostle Paul who was so convicted of his message and what this meant for others, that he was unceasing in his sharing of it. He had not only seen this in the lives of others but he had also personally experienced the transformation from sin and unbelief to freedom and belief. He had absolute confidence in his message for it was the one message that had the power to transform lives.

Read Romans 1:16–17
2 Corinthians 5:16–21
2 Corinthians 6:1–2

Paul presents us with three significant challenges:

- if we have been transformed by Jesus, so can others
- we are to be Christ's ambassadors, imploring people to seek Christ
- we live in the day of salvation and we need to share it

Jesus needs us to be messengers of the word and not allow ourselves to be diverted from the message. Jesus is the heart of our message and we need to use every available means to communicate and proclaim that message clearly and appropriately in this age.

For reflection:

- What challenges you most in the verses you have read?
- What can you personally do in response to these challenges?
- How can we be more proactive in sharing the message in this modern age?

3. Where to from here?

This is where the challenge becomes ever more real. We can sometimes think that discovering Jesus and committing our life to him is the end. But, in actual fact, it is only the beginning of a new journey. Young Christians need to be disciplined and nurtured in their faith journey to enable them to grow. Those who have been faithful followers of Jesus for many years also need to be nurtured in this way.

Read Galatians 6:1–10
Ephesians 4:1–6
Philippians 2:1–11

It's all about growing in Jesus and walking in step with his spirit.

For reflection:

- Which of these passages encourages you in your journey?
- What aspect of your faith journey would you like to develop further?
- How can you enable other believers to walk in step with the spirit?

For us to be truly effective in our evangelism, we need to be equally effective in our discipleship and that will require having quality resources available, including the giving of our time.

Conclusion

A God-raised and Spirit-filled Army is a new song specifically written by Commissioners Robert Street (IHQ) and Dick Krommenhoek (Finland & Estonia) to support the International Vision launched by General Linda Bond. Verse 3 of this song summarises our study well:

The transforming message of Jesus,
With power to make lives anew,
Speaks healing to lost, broken people
And proves all his promises true.
We ask that in sharing your message
We also its fullness embrace;
O Lord, may your Word live within us,
One message, your message, of grace.

*One Army, one mission, one message,
One Saviour and Lord of all;
An Army with purpose and passion,
We are united to answer his call.
An Army following Christ together,
Reaching the lost with his love;
One Army, one mission, one message
For the world.*

All Bible quotes are from the New International Version.

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