



Evangelistically Active Week One

Welcome to the first week of our bible reading notes looking at 'Evangelistically Active', which is our topic for the next five weeks in our morning service, leading up to Easter Day.

Our aim with these notes is to encourage one another to read God's word, so you may want commit with a friend to do these bible readings and to pray each day – and then ask each other how you've got on during the week.

This week we're going to spend some time looking at Luke 24, and also look at a few of the Old Testament passages which point us towards the good news going out from Jerusalem to all the nations.

These notes should hopefully be useful for individuals and for families with and without children. Each day, there is a bible passage to read – **read that first**, and **pray** - ask God to help you understand it. (If it is your habit to spend some time with the passage and make your own notes, then do that now.)

Once you've read the passage and thought about it – have a look at the accompanying notes. The notes cover some of the context of the passage, an explanation and an application. There are also some accompanying questions or suggestions for action. As God speaks to you through his word, you may wish to write down what he is calling you to do (and share it with someone!) However, don't worry if sometimes you don't receive an obvious answer to prayer or clear instruction – just keep faithfully reading God's word, and He will use it in your live, as the Holy Spirit works in you.

After you've looked at the bible passage is a good time to pray – pray for strength to do what you need to do – thank God for what you have learned about him – and bring your requests before him.

Then, you'll see that there is an activity for families with children; the target age range of these activities is 4-11ish, so you may need to modify them. This activity draws on one or two of the verses you've been reading, and give you some suggestions for sharing them with the family – over the breakfast or tea table perhaps. There's a starter activity to get people thinking, then reading the passage, some questions to answer, and then something to read – and a prayer so you don't forget to pray (just a starting point – do pray for longer if you can). Should take about five minutes – but can easily expand if you want it to.

Don't worry about communicating everything – particularly if you've got small children – communicating something of the good news of Jesus Christ every day is a great place to begin.

Enjoy – and let me know how you get on

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'James'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'J'.



Monday

Luke 24:25-27 Beginning with Moses...

Luke 24:25-27

This week we begin with a passage from Luke's gospel, where Jesus meets with two followers, one named Cleopas, on the road to Emmaus. When we join the story in verse 25, these men do not yet know they are talking to Jesus. They have just been expressing their hopes that Jesus would be the messiah, and that he would rise from the dead (v19-21), and how some of the women claim that Jesus is alive (v22-24). But they still struggle to believe.

Thus Jesus rebukes them in verse 25, for being slow to believe. Why? because all these things that they have described were necessary for the messiah to suffer before entering glory v26, and they should have understood this. And so Jesus explains it to them, from the Old Testament scriptures, verse 27.

We will look a little at some of these Old Testament scriptures which point us to Jesus over the next few days. Today we remind ourselves that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die for our salvation. We remind ourselves that Jesus suffered and died on the cross for our sins, for all the things that we have done wrong. That by dying for us, he paid the penalty we deserve, and took it in our place, so that we might live. We remember that by his death, we have life. And finally we remember that he died, rose again, and has ascended to glory.

Notice how verse 26 puts it: it was necessary for these things to happen. Jesus' death was not an accident, but something he did for us. And we thank God that he did!

So today:

Give thanks to Jesus for coming and suffering and dying in our place

Ask that you might know his forgiveness of sins, and remember what he has done for you

Pray for courage to share this good news with others

Activity for Families with Children

Starter: talk about where Jesus is now (heaven) and how he got there (he came down, he lived, he died, he rose again, he ascended into heaven). Why did Jesus die?

Read Luke 24:26

What did Jesus suffer?

Why did Jesus suffer?

Read: Jesus Christ came and lived among us, and then died for us. He suffered instead of us,, so that we might have forgiveness of sins. Then he rose again and went back to heaven.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for suffering and dying for me. Thank you for rising again and being alive in heaven today. Amen.



Weekend

Luke 24:46-48 Be my witnesses

Read Luke 24:46-48

We saw Yesterday that Jesus opened the scriptures to his disciples. Now we see what he said to them. We see again the focus on the Christ suffering and dying and rising again (v46). Then we see the implication of this—that the good news of repentance and forgiveness of sins should go out from Jerusalem to all the nations (v47). And then we see the role of the disciples: they are witnesses, and the role of a witness is to tell others what they have seen (v48).

If we put this together with what we saw yesterday, we see how this works for us. We understand what the bible tells us about Jesus, and that message centres on the cross, and what Jesus did—so the message that goes out is one of repentance and forgiveness. We repent of our sins, and we receive forgiveness in Jesus. But not only that—we also take this message out to others. We are not witnesses in exactly the same way as the disciples, for they were eyewitnesses to all that Jesus did and said. However, we are able to witness to what God's word tells us about who Jesus is. This week we've been looking at a bit more of that story.

We share this with others, and trust that, just as the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes and minds to understand the word, do too will they grasp their need to repent, and to receive forgiveness, the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So let us hear the call to be Christ's witnesses.

So today

Give thanks for the good news and this great opportunity to be witnesses

Pray for courage to share the gospel.

Activity for Families with Children

Starter: talk about something you saw. What do you remember about it? what would you tell others about it?

Read Luke 24:46-48

What have the disciples seen?

What are they going to do?

Read: Jesus sends us out to be his witnesses, to tell other people about Him, so that they might know Him too.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, help us to tell others about you. Amen.



Friday Luke 24:44-45 Minds opened

Read Luke 24:44-45

For the final two days of our studies this week, we are returning to Luke 24. We pick up the story a little later in the chapter, where Jesus has met with and revealed himself to his disciples, and eaten with them (Luke 24:36-43). Now he reminds them of what he said to them when he was with them, about how the Old Testament is fulfilled in Him (v25). Then we are told that he opened their minds to understand the scriptures (v26).

Here we see the beginnings of what comes to pass in Acts 2, when Peter stands up at Pentecost: the disciples who have had a hard time understanding what Jesus has said receive the Holy Spirit, and understand, and share that with others.

We might wish we were there in Luke 24:26—it must have been a fabulous conversation! However, we too follow the same process—we study the scriptures to understand what it is that God is saying to us. We seek to understand more about Jesus that we might love him more, and his people more—just as we have been doing this week. And we pray that the Holy Spirit will enable us to understand and apply the scriptures to ourselves—and then share them with others.

So today

Give thanks for the gift of God's word, and his Spirit, to help us to know Jesus and make Him known.

Pray for the right words to be able to share with others about who Jesus is

Activity for Families with Children

Starter: How do we get to know God and Jesus better?

Read Luke 24:44-45

What do the disciples need to understand?

Read: We find out about Jesus from the bible. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's Word.

Prayer: Dear God thank you for your word. Help us to understand it better. Amen.



Tuesday Genesis 3:15 The Good News begins.

Genesis 3:15

Yesterday we saw that Jesus showed his followers on the Emmaus road how all the scriptures pointed to Him. Here in Genesis 3:15 we come across one of the first examples of that.

Genesis 3:15 comes in the midst of God's promise to the serpent after Adam and Eve have rebelled against God, and eaten the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent, that is the devil, is cursed (v14), and part of that curse is opposition between the offspring of the woman (human beings) and the offspring of the serpent. At the end of verse 15, we read how the serpent will strike or bruise the heel of the offspring of the woman, and how the offspring of the woman will bruise or crush the serpent's head.

On one level, this is a general description of conflict. But there is also more in view here, as we see here how one of the woman's descendants will crush the head of the serpent, even as the serpent strikes his heel, and this points us to what Jesus does on the cross. He is struck down—but in his death, Jesus defeats death, and evil, and the serpent.

So we see here that, even as Adam and Eve are being expelled from the garden of Eden, even as evil enters into the world, there is a promise that God will deal with the problem of sin, and evil, and death, through the offspring of the woman. We are reminded again of God's mercy to us, that even as we started sinning, so his plan for salvation, which as Ephesians 1:4 tells us began before the foundation of the world, was beginning to be revealed.

So today:

Give thanks to God for his plan for us, and his mercy to us.

Give thanks to God for defeating sin, evil and death for us.

Pray for greater understanding of all that Christ has done for us.

Activity for Families with Children

Starter: if you had to deal with a snake—how would you do it? (*I hope this doesn't get too graphic*).

Read Genesis 3:15

What does the serpent do to the woman's offspring?

What does the woman's offspring do to the serpent?

Who do you think wins?

Read: Jesus Christ died on the cross, struck down—but he rose again, showing that he had defeated death, and also the serpent, which is the devil.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for defeated sin and evil and death for me.



Wednesday

Genesis 12:1-3 The Promise to Abraham

Read: Genesis 12:1-3

Today we're moving a little further on in the Old Testament story, to Genesis 12:1-3. Here we see God's promise to Abraham, a promise which is fulfilled through the rest of the Old Testament and into the New Testament.

In verse 1, God calls Abram (the name change to Abraham comes later in the story) into a new **land**. He then promises to make him into a great **nation** (v2). Finally, Abraham will receive God's **blessing**, but also through his blessing will come to the whole earth (v2-3).

At this point in the story, all these promises are more or less impossible. For starters, we already know that Abraham doesn't have any children (Genesis 11:30). And that land that God shows him already belongs to other people. And how can blessing to the whole world come through one man? But, as we advance through the Old Testament we see how these promises are gradually fulfilled, so that by the time of the Kings like David and Solomon, Abraham's descendants—the people of Israel—are living in the land God has given them, and are being blessed.

But the final part of the promise, the promise that all nations will be blessed by Abraham's offspring, only comes true when we come to the New Testament, and to Jesus. Here is the one who comes as saviour—not just for the Jewish people, but for the Gentiles too—for all the nations. And so God, as always, keeps his promises. We are blessed through the descendant of Abraham, through Jesus

So today:

Give thanks to God for keeping his promise to us in Jesus.

Pray that we would understand more and more of the great story we are part of as it unfolds through God's word.

Activity for Families with Children

Starter: Imagine I said you were going to be the king or queen of somewhere. What would you need to have? (*hopefully you'll get something approximating land—somewhere to live—and people here. All the trappings—crowns, palaces etc.—can be classed as blessings!*)

Read Genesis 12:1-3

Where does God send Abraham?

What does he promise him?

Read: God promises Abraham a land, a people, and blessing. God keeps his promise to Abraham—and sends Jesus to be a blessing not just to Abraham's children, but to all people everywhere.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus we thank you that Jesus has come for all different kinds of people. Amen.



Thursday

Exodus 19:5-6 Treasured Possession

Read Exodus 19:5-6

For our final look at a passage from the Old Testament which helps point us to Jesus, we come to Exodus 19.

Here, God's people are at Sinai, having been rescued from Egypt, and are about to receive God's law, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). God has rescued them, and now he is telling them who they are to be as his redeemed people.

We see in verse 5 that the Israelites will be God's treasured possession—if they keep God's covenant. They are to be a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation, verse 6, living differently before the world and showing to the world what it means to live as God's people. As we look at these verses, we are struck both by the awesome call by God to his people—but also their failure to keep the covenant. So often, Israel's history is a history of failure to keep God's covenant—as we have been seeing with David in 2 Samuel.

And so this promise of a holy nation and a kingdom of priests remains unfulfilled in the Old Testament, we catch glimpses of it in the reigns of David and Solomon, but again we have to wait to the New Testament and for Jesus. He is the one who fulfils Israel's call to be holy, and he is the one who is our king, and priest, and sacrifice.

And because of Jesus' work, we are God's treasured possession—because Jesus has kept the covenant for us. We fail to be obedient, yet Jesus died for us, so that we might be right with God.

So today:

Give thanks to Jesus that he was obedient to his Father, even to death on the cross.

Give thanks that because of his obedience in life and death, we are God's treasured possession.

Pray that we would understand who we are in Christ—and live accordingly

Activity for Families with Children

Starter: talk about our treasured possessions—what do we value most?

Read Exodus 19:5

What or who is God's treasured possession?

What should they do?

Read: God loves us so much, that he sent Jesus to die for us, because we are his treasured possession. Jesus was obedient in our place.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you that you loved us so much that you lived and died for us. Amen.