

# CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Life Group Study - Shalom

This study includes three readings and a prayer to close. There are not specific questions, rather reflect upon each reading in light of the kingdom of God and our mandate as the people of God – the church.

1. Scripture... Read Luke 24:45-49
2. A Quote... NT Wright, Simply Jesus

*Jesus tells his followers to go and announce to the world that a new way of life has been opened, the way of “repentance” and “forgiveness”. To us Westerners, that sounds a bit gloomy, as though it’s a perpetual act of contrition, dredging up our “sins” in order to hear someone declare them forgiven (until next time!). But it’s far, far bigger than that. The old creation lives by pride and retribution: I stand up for myself, and if someone gets in my way I try to get even. We’ve been there, done that, and got the scars to prove it. Now there is a completely different way to live, a way of love and reconciliation and healing and hope. It’s a way nobody’s ever tried before, a way that is as unthinkable to most human beings and societies as – well, as resurrection itself. Precisely. That’s the point. Welcome to Jesus’ new world.’*

3. A Reflection... Sarah Bessey, Canadian Christian author. This piece was written in reflection of the reconciliation which is taking place in Canada between the indigenous and non-indigenous people. A land like so many others, ours included, which has been brutalised by the corrupt and evil systems (principalities and powers) which the Apostle Paul describes in Ephesians.

*If we aren’t reconciled to one another, then our resurrection has no teeth, it has no bones, it has no shape.*

*It is weak and individualized, it has nothing to say to the suffering, and it surrenders authority over death.*

*Without reconciliation – real reconciliation, not the niceties or warm momentary feelings or platitudes or head-pats of false reconciliation that makes us feel better without ever really changing anyone – we are missing something deeply important about Easter.*

*Christ’s death and resurrection is the story of the greatest reconciliation, the end of our separation from God, the extravagant welcome of the Father to the prodigal son. In Colossians 1:19-20, Paul writes, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him*

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*[Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”*

*This reconciliation is meant to spill over and into our right-now lives because God has given us the ministry of reconciliation through the resurrection.*

*And could we truly be that ambassador of reconciliation without reconciliation between one another?*

*We don't simply share in Christ's resurrection as individuals but also as a community. And that new life is testifying within our communities as invitation, as a sign of the greatest reconciliation. If Jesus is our reconciler then we are disciples of reconciliation, too.*

*Reconciliation between us is a taste of the divine, incarnate Love reconciling all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, things past or present or future.*

*Reconciliation is hard and humbling, this is true, and it's also startlingly beautiful as if we were hiking through the woods at the base of the mountain and then we suddenly come face-to-face with a powerful waterfall, raining down from the glaciers at the top, ready to quench our thirst.*

*I've learned that reconciliation sort of beauty isn't soft – it has heft and space, marked by sorrow and suffering.*

*This sort of hard-won beauty is a drum and a song, it is dignity and honour, it is tears and repentance, it is eyes to see and ears to hear and hearts to understand. It is long-silenced or long-ignored voices rising in song. It is strength of shared power. It is harmony between the land and the people. It is community and prayer. It's protests on a pipeline and it is clean water. It is an equitable justice system and good books, it's dismantling old ways to make room of the wild vine of the Spirit to grow free and unfettered. It is seeking to understand rather than be understood.*

4. A Prayer... St Francis of Assisi.

Lord make me an instrument of your peace  
Where there is hatred let me sow love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
And where there is sadness, joy  
O divine master grant that I may  
not so much seek to be consoled as to console  
to be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love  
For it is in giving that we receive  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
And it's in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.