

CORNERSTONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

GOSPEL SHAPED EYES

Life group Study – The Rising Tide

Having Gospel Shaped Eyes means that we walk in faith, which means we believe in God's goodness even in the hard times. It is this faith that enables us to hope for a better tomorrow, to hope for freedom, to hope that God's will is done in our life as it is in heaven.

Although the rhythms of life bring an ebb and flow of good times and challenging times God's plan and purpose always remain – they are the bed rock that holds the tide. He provides us an unchanging constant foundation for our life as storms come and go.

Read Ephesians 4:11-13

- What are the defining characteristics of a mature church?
- How would we see this outworked today?
- What role do you think the works of service play in growing maturity in the church?

When Jesus prayed it was that we would be in unison – a united front – a solid team working for the same purpose with all our different abilities. It is a nice picture but it is not easy to achieve – in fact I would go so far as to say without God it would be impossible. So Christ gave us apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors to help shape our eyes and also our hearts to be Gospel shaped so we are fully equipped for our role as his church here on earth.

Read Ephesians 4:14-16

- What are the biggest threats to our faith and the church in today's world?

With our gospel shaped eyes we can spot the fake and recognise the real. Like having a template for the truth – we just hold it up and say, "That looks like Jesus, that looks like Jesus, almost like Jesus but not quite – definitely not Jesus".

We have to believe that whenever we are gathered together in His name he uses each of us to shape our perspective. It is not with words but with our actions that we hold each other accountable. We all hold to the same standard - the standard of Christ.

Paul's point is that we, as a community, grow together and become more spiritually mature as a whole. This spiritual maturing creates an environment, a culture where others can grow.

- What can we do to be part of providing an environment where others can find faith?

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We are after all a spiritual community – linked together in our common faith and love of Jesus Christ. Our bottom line is a spiritual one – success is people finding freedom, being healed, lives transformed, baptised and growing in faith. Anything and everything that brings glory to God is a win for the Kingdom and a blow against the enemy.

Read Psalm 23:5

- Do you believe God is able to provide for you in the desert times in life just as much as in the good times?
- Which circumstances reveal his power more?

Those times where we stand in faith despite the crap going on are testimony to God's strength to hold us. And as Paul goes on to remind us we are here for a purpose which is why we don't beam up once we get saved – we suit up and get into the fight....

Read Romans 10:9-16

- **How is faith spread?**
- **Do you think God has an expectation of us?**

Sunday is our training ground, our storehouse and our form up point for our week ahead.

The early church had some pretty amazing stories about what God was doing through ordinary men and women who simply had faith in the risen Christ.

Even as persecution was breaking out against them there was a rising tide of faith in the church that led them to share Christ wherever they went.

Read ACTS 8:26-34

- How did Phil end up in the right place at the right time?
- Have you ever had things work out with such amazing timing and coincidence the way it did for the Eunuch?
- On a scale of 1-10 how would you feel about sharing Christ with someone?

I like to think of church like a forest – as the trees grow and mature they create an ecosystem where the seedlings can be protected and nourished. As Paul teaches us at the heart of spiritual maturity is the concern for others – something that we can't achieve on our own. Therefore as the whole body grows together we are all lifted up – faith grows, hope grows, patience grows, generosity grows and most importantly LOVE grows.

It doesn't necessarily matter what is happening around us because we have this sanctuary of relationship that enables us to grow more like Christ even though there is so much going on.