



christ church
moreton

KNOWING GOD

CHRIST CHURCH
HOME-GROUPS
Jan / Feb 2012

Show me your ways, O Lord,
teach me your paths;
guide me in your truth
and teach me,
for you are God my Saviour,
and my hope is in you all day long
Psalm 25:4-5

In a world where hope seems to be in very short supply, our theme verse for 2012 reminds us that as Christians we do have hope – hope in God.

But who is this God we can confidently put our hope in? Still the majority of people in our society say that they believe in God – but there is a bewildering array of different beliefs around about God. As his people, we need to make sure that our faith really is in the God who is there. We need to know the truth about God if we are to depend on him.

Of course, we will never know all that there is to know about God – he is far too wonderful for us to begin to comprehend. But in his word he has revealed himself to us, and over these 4 study's we will look at 4 of the most important things the Bible tells us about God; he is beyond compare, he is glorious, he is good, and he is love.

1. God Beyond Compare

The diary for this term looks like this:

Week beginning 9 th January	Home Group 1
Week beginning 16 th January	Home Group 2
Week beginning 23 rd January	Home Group 3
Wednesday 1 st February	PRAYER MEETING
Week beginning 6 th February	Home Group 4
Week beginning 13 th February	Free week (half-term)
Wednesday 22 nd February	Ash Wednesday Communion
Week beginning 27 th February (Our Lent groups will then run for 5 weeks)	Start of Lent Groups

WELCOME

Did you make any New Year resolutions? Why? (Or why not?)

WORSHIP

Our theme verse for 2012 is taken from Psalm 25. Use this psalm together to start your new series of home-groups.

WORD

A. W. Tozer wrote: "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of him." But if we are honest, we all have unworthy thoughts about God—especially during times of stress or difficulty. Does God care? Has he given up on me? Can he really help me out of this mess?

- There are many times for all of us when God seems distant or uncaring. How do you respond when God feels far away?

READ Isaiah 40:1-11

God's people had been going through a tough time – conquered and taken into exile because of their sin.

- What good news did Isaiah have for the people?
- The image of God being a shepherd is a common one in the Bible. In what ways does God act like a shepherd to his people?

READ Isaiah 40:12-26

But could God help his people? Isaiah's word to them was: "Your God is too small!" In this passage he challenges our puny thoughts, overwhelming us with the majesty, wisdom, grace and power of our incomparable God.

- How does verse 12 show us the greatness of God?
- Even small problems can seem overwhelming while we are experiencing them. How can the portrait of God in verse 12 encourage us at such times?
- What aspect of God's character is stressed in verses 13-14?

Israel had been conquered and the people taken off into exile in Babylon. Babylon was the super-power of the day – no-one could resist them.

- How do verses 15-17 help God's people in that situation?

- How might they apply to us today?
- Why is an idol a pitiful substitute for God (w. 18-20)?
- At what point do people or things become substitutes for God?
- Why do you think God challenges us to compare him to counsellors, nations, idols, princes and rulers?
- Israel complained that God seemed distant and uncaring (v. 27). How do verses 12-26 answer this charge?

READ Isaiah 40:27-31

- What encouragement does God give us when we feel weary and without strength (w. 28-31)?
- What does it mean to 'hope in the Lord'? (v.31)

WORK

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever. What can you do this year to rely more on the unchanging word of the Lord?

2. God's Glory

WELCOME

What is the most wonderful sight you have seen?

WORSHIP

Psalm 111 tells us of God's greatness and his goodness, and reminds us that we need to honour him. Use the psalm together.

WORD

There can be a lot of difference between being acquainted with someone and really knowing that person. To really know a person means knowing their character – what they are like deep inside. But no deep relationship is possible without that real knowledge of the other person.

Charles Spurgeon once said: "The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy which can ever engage the attention of a child of God is the name ... of the great God whom he calls his Father." God's names in Scripture are more than labels—they are revelations of his character. As God proclaims his name, we come to know him more intimately.

READ Exodus 33:12-23

This story narrates a slice of Moses' unique experience as a prophet of God. He has pleaded with God to spare the people and continue his support and presence among them. Elated by God's answer, Moses asks to see God's glory. When God appears, Moses sees only his "back" not his "face," but he hears words of definitive self-revelation. These words reveal the nature of the God we worship.

- In 33:3 the Lord had threatened not to go with the people into the Promised Land because of their wickedness. How does Moses respond v 12-13)?
- Why is Moses so concerned about God's Presence with Israel (v 14-16)?
- Why is it important today as well as then for God's Presence to be the distinguishing mark of his people?

In verse 17 God tells Moses that he knows him by name.

- Why is that significant – after all, surely God knows everyone's name.
- What would it mean for Moses to know God by name (w. 18-22)?
- Why do you think Moses desires this so much?

God allows Moses to see something of his glory, but he puts limits on this because no one may see God and live (vv. 19-23).

- Why do you think this is so?

READ Exodus 34:1-8.

God told Moses to bring the stone tablets with him to the mountain (w. 1-4).

- How were the Ten Commandments a partial answer to Moses' prayer in 33:18?
- In verses 6-7 the Lord passes in front of Moses. How is God's goodness revealed in each attribute he mentions?
- In what ways does God reveal his goodness and glory today?

WORK

In response to God's glory, Moses worships. How can you prepare for our services this coming Sunday, so that you come together ready to worship God for his presence, goodness and glory?

3. God's Goodness

WELCOME

What is the best bit of news you've seen on TV, heard on the radio or read in the press this week?

WORSHIP

Psalm 145 reminds us of many things that we have to praise God for, and encourages us to tell others of what he has done. Take some time to share with one another what God has done for you, then use the psalm together.

WORD

In September 8, 1860, the steamer The Lady Elgin sank in Lake Michigan. A young student for the ordained ministry named Edward Spencer dived repeatedly into the icy waters and rescued seventeen people. The prolonged exposure permanently damaged his health, however, and he was unable to complete his studies. Some years later at his funeral it was noted that not one of the seventeen people he saved ever returned to thank him.

Thankfulness is basic to godliness. As we recognise God's goodness, it should lead us to thank him for all that he has done for us in the past and the present.

READ Psalm 107

This psalm shows us how much it means to say that God is good, and calls us to thank him for his goodness to us in the past and the present.

- How do verses 1-3 provide the theme and tone of the psalm?

The psalmist describes four different incidents in verses 4-9, 10-16, 17-22 and 23-32.

- What brief title would you give to each incident?

- What elements do they have in common?

- How is God's unfailing love demonstrated in each of these situations?

Each scene begins by describing a calamity and a cry for help.

- Do you think it is true that we often have to hit rock bottom before we cry out to God?

- Why is this?

- Is there any situation in your life at present for which you need the Lord's help? What sort of help do you need?

Each scene ends by describing God's salvation and by calling us to give thanks for his unfailing love.

- Why do we often forget to thank God for answered prayers?

- What prayers has God answered recently for which you are thankful?

Verse 43 states that if we are wise we will "heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord."

- What things does the psalmist want us to heed?

WORK

It is important for a home-group to pray for one another. But it is also important to give thanks together for answered prayer. Why not make a point not only of sharing prayer requests, but also of sharing answers to prayer (even if the answers weren't quite what you were expecting!)

4. God is Love

WELCOME

What in your life are you most proud of?

WORSHIP

'This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.' Praise God for his love for you.

WORD

Love. Where would we be without it? It dominates our songs, poems, movies and novels. We value it above every virtue. We long to find it and fight to keep it. Everyone has an opinion about it, but no one seems to have enough of it.

- Why do you think love dominates music, movies, literature and so many other aspects of our lives?

Love is central to the apostle John's first letter. He helps us to understand its source, its nature and its significance for our lives as Christians. Most importantly, John enables us to see what the often-quoted statement "God is love" really means.

READ 1 John 4:7-5:5.

- Children usually resemble their parents. How does this principle relate to those who claim to be God's children (v 7-8)
- Does this mean that everyone who loves is God's child, regardless of his or her beliefs? If not, what does it mean?
- What does John mean when he says, "God is love"?
- How do verses 9-10 emphasize the nature and depth of God's love?

"Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (v. 11).

- What does this tell us about how we should love one another?
- How might we put this into practice?
- How does our love for each other make the invisible God visible?

- If our lives are characterized by love, why can we be confident rather than fearful on the day of judgment (w. 17-18)?

It certainly seems possible that we could love God and yet hate one of our brothers and sisters.

- According to John, why is this impossible (v 19-21)?

At the start of chapter 5, John lists some of the things that are true for those who are Christians. But I guess that most of us know that we fall short in one way or another.

- If some of these things are not true, does that mean a person is not a Christian? If not, what does John mean here?

WORK

What can you do as a group to show God's love among yourselves, within Christ Church, and in our community?

CHRIST CHURCH, MORETON

We want to be a **W**elcoming Church

Because Jesus welcomed all who came to him

an **E**vangelising Church

Because we believe that everyone has the right to hear the Good News of Jesus

a **L**oving Church

Because Jesus commanded his followers to love one another

a **L**earning Church

Because we are in the business of making disciples, and disciples must always be learners