

# **The Good News of the Kingdom**

## **The Gospel in Four Words**

**Freedom:** God wants to break the power of evil over your life and set you free to know His love for you.

**Jesus:** He sent His Son Jesus to show us the way and make this possible.

**Repentance:** He invites you to turn from your own ways and put your trust completely in Him.

**Baptism:** If you want to make this complete change in your life, you must die to what you have been and let God give you His new life. We call this baptism...

## **Grasping for hope**

We all hope for a better future. That is why we educate ourselves. It is why people want to go to university. It is why people vote in elections. It is why we take risks. Without hope we would just give up and die!

Every culture offers its own pathway to a better future. In traditional rural cultures it often involves ancestor worship and sacrificial offerings. In tribal cultures it often involves obtaining a dominant position over competing tribes. In religious cultures it usually involves some sort of self-cleansing and penance. In secular cultures it often involves the accumulation of wealth and the domination of others.

The point is that there are many different ways in which people seek to improve their lives. God is also interested in this. He created us, loves us and wants our lives to be fruitful and blessed. He wants your life to be fruitful and blessed.

## **Frustrated by Sin**

But our lives are made difficult because of sin. The sin of countless generations before us has created great injustice and imbalance in the world. The sin of our governments has resulted in broken economies and widespread injustice. Sin in our communities results in people being cheated and ill-treated. Sin in our families results in arguments and fights and deep emotional pain. We have individually and corporately messed up our world and our own lives.

So where do we turn for help and guidance? We look to our own reason – trying to make sense of the situation and work out a way forward. We turn to our family and friends for advice. We turn to our culture and traditions for wisdom. We look both inward and outward to the things we can perceive and try to make the best choice we can. But God is not far from any of us. And He sees what we can never see. He also sees the big-picture; how our actions affect those around us and those who will come after us.

## **Light from Above**

The Good News of the Gospel is that God has broken into our dark and confused world by sending His Son Jesus to live and die as a man. He was rejected by many and suffered terrible injustice, resulting in His murder by being nailed to a tree and left to die. But God raised Him up from death and Jesus is now alive and reigns over the Kingdom of God all over the world today.

We can choose to continue to try and find our own way, as we always have done, or we can put our trust in God and follow Jesus' way. But we cannot pick and choose. Jesus does not just offer a few other choices we can pick from. If we want the light of Jesus in our lives we need to turn our backs on all other voices and listen only to Jesus.

That is Jesus' call – "Repent; turn around. Believe the Truth that is Jesus Christ. Turn your back on all other claims of wisdom and light and trust only in Jesus as your Light."

## **Becoming a child of God**

God welcomes all who put their whole trust in Jesus. We need to become God's children through being baptised in water and baptised in the Holy Spirit. In the water we die to our old way of living and thinking

and all the sin and curses of our past are cut off forever. Then we rise up as a new person, God's holy child, and receive the transforming and empowering Holy Spirit. He becomes our teacher and guide.

### **The Narrow Way**

Living in the Light of Jesus is counter-cultural. It often leads to great blessing but it also leads to great challenges; Jesus was rejected and killed! This is not the easy path, but it is God's way of love which brings freedom and healing to our broken world. God dwells in His children to enable them to bring Jesus' love and healing to others. He sends us to love one another and to go and make disciples...