

Study Guide, Term 1/2016



Leaders' Guide

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

(Matthew 24:14 ESV)

**GROW
TOGETHER
IN JESUS
FOR GOD'S GLORY**

 Grace Christian Church

The logo for Grace Christian Church features a stylized blue cross with three curved lines above it, representing a rainbow or clouds.

Grace Community Groups

Each week, across the Sunshine Coast, small groups from Grace Christian Church meet to

- study the Bible,
- pray together,
- worship God,
- encourage each other,
- care for one-another,
- grow together as followers of Jesus,
- laugh, cry, discuss life's big questions,
- and build lasting friendships!



Area/Group Focus	Meeting time	Contact	Phone
Bli Bli	Wednesday, 7.00pm	John Baird	(07) 5448 4040
Buderim	Monday, 7.00pm	Colin Weston	(07) 5476 9648
Buderim/Sippy Downs	Thursday, 7.00pm	Clint Lombard	0478 578 152
Caloundra	Wednesday, 7.15pm	Roger Anderson	(07) 5491 9442
Kawana/Wurtulla	Monday (fortnightly), 6.30pm	Tim Richards	(07) 5438 2201
West Woombye	1st and 3rd Thursdays, 7.00pm	Des Morris	0432 089 069
Woombye (Kiels Mountain)	Tuesday, 7.00pm	Clint Lombard	0478 578 152
Ladies	Thursday, 10.00am	Alison Sheldon	(07) 5477 1895
Young Mums	Tuesday, 10:00am	Jean Bowen-Jones	0402 746 533
Day-time (mixed)	Tuesday, 10:30am	Rick Zylstra	0407 725 899

If you're not part of a group yet, why not? It might take courage to join a group, or it might take a bit of personal rescheduling, but we promise that you won't regret it!

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Introduction to the Study Guide

It's time to proclaim the Kingdom.

Welcome to our first study series for 2016. We're praying that as we study what it means to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom in Matthew's gospel, that we'd all be encouraged and challenged to be kingdom-proclaimers ourselves.

Introduction to Matthew

Matthew was a disciple of Jesus. He had been called to follow Jesus from behind his tax-collectors' booth.

Tax collectors were often seen as sell-outs by their fellow countrymen. Tax collectors bought licences to collect taxes from the Roman government, and then collected taxes themselves, plus interest, to recoup their outlay.

But this doesn't bother Jesus. He simply calls Matthew, and Matthew leaves his booth with the money on the table and follows Jesus (Luke 5:27-32)



We don't know much else about Matthew other than that he comes from a Jewish background. A lot of his gospel is concerned with demonstrating the connection between the Old Testament and Jesus. He often references the Old Testament, showing how prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus, using the words, "As it is written..."

The Kingdom in Matthew's Gospel

Part of this focus on fulfilment relates to the Kingdom of God that was promised in the Old Testament.

God said in 1 Chronicles 17:11, speaking to King David:

"When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever."'''

(1 Chronicles 17:11–14 ESV)

Much of Jesus' ministry is concerned with announcing, or proclaiming, the arrival of that Kingdom, with himself as the promised "Son of David" - the King of God's Kingdom.

Matthew begins his record of Jesus' ministry with an announcement of the Kingdom:

"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.""

(Matthew 4:17 ESV)

The biggest challenge for Jesus' hearers, for Matthew's early readers, and for ourselves today, is recognising the Kingdom of God for what it is.

Some have thought it is a political kingdom, established through policy. Some have thought it is an empire, established through military conquest. Some have thought the Kingdom is just a metaphor for "a new society of transformed individuals based on the timeless ethical and religious principles of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of humanity."



In actual fact, the kingdom Jesus is talking about, and the Kingdom of God foreshadowed in the Old Testament is none of these things. American Bible teacher R.C. Sproul has summarised the truth of the Kingdom of God like this:

"[The kingdom is] the decisive intrusion of God's saving presence into this world through the Messiah's life, death, and resurrection."

This is the Kingdom Jesus proclaims in Matthew. It's often surprising, but it's always wonderful. And this is the Kingdom that we are called to continue proclaiming.

- Clint Lombard & Rick Zylstra
25 January 2016

How to use this study guide

Each weekly study in this guide is divided into two major sections:

Sermon

Sermon Notes

The first section of each study is based around the Sunday sermon. There is a section for you to write notes during the sermon. You might want to write down

- The major points of the message
- Things that interested you
- Important verses and other verse references

This will help you follow what is being taught, but it will also help you remember what you learnt when you look over your notes later.

The Big Idea

This block is where you can write the one Big Idea of the message. Every message should have one simple, clear '**Big Idea**' which you can take away.

Questions

It's normal to go away from a Bible message still having questions. This section is for you to write down those things, so that you can try to find out later, maybe by asking the pastor or your group leader, or discussing it with your group.

Group Bible Study

You can do these studies in your own, but to get the most out of them, you should try and attend a weekly group Bible study - a Grace Community Group. The studies in this guide are designed using an easy framework called '**COMA**':

Context: These questions help you understand where the text fits into the big picture. It's about asking, "What's been happening up to this point?"

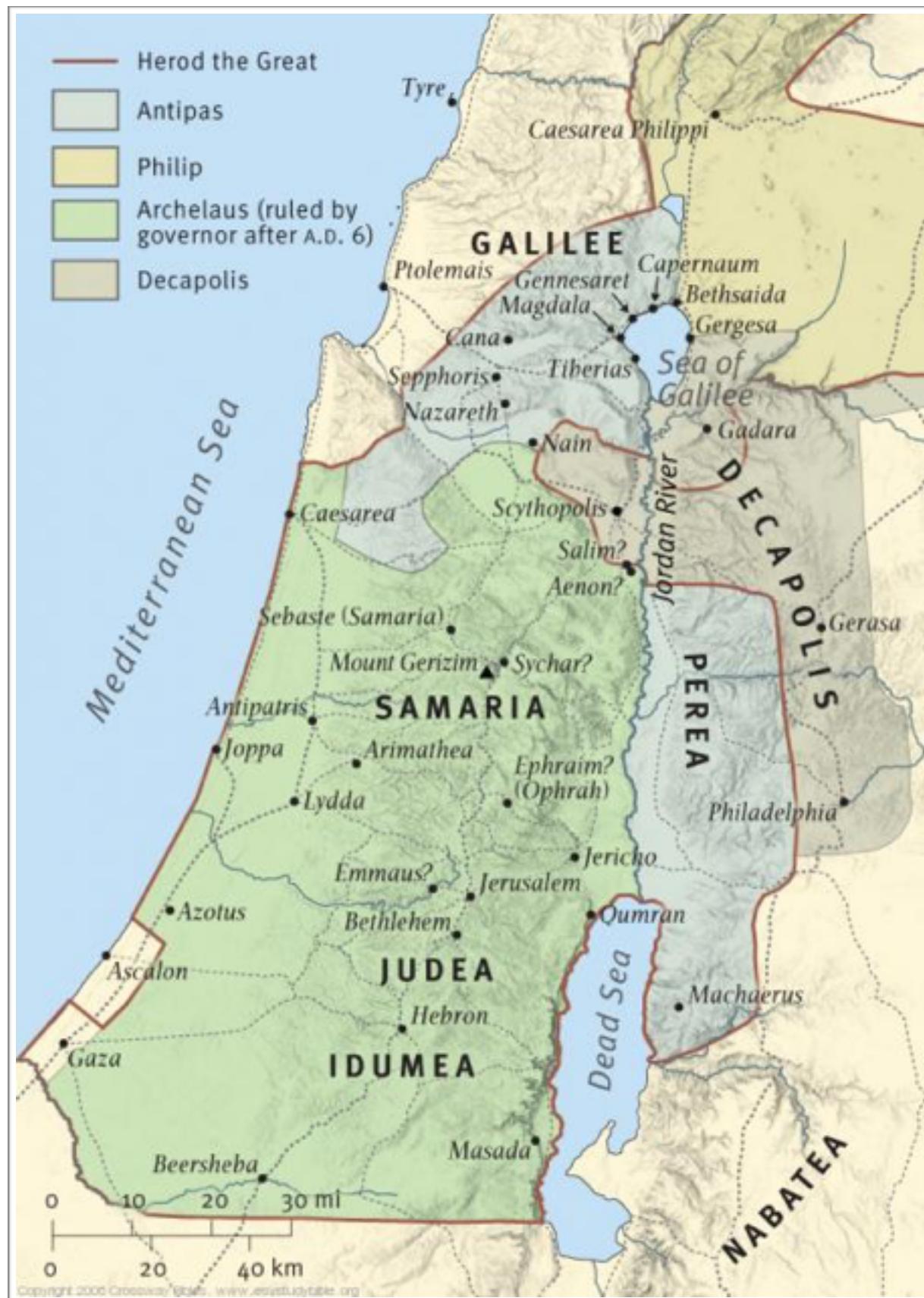
Observation: These questions help you to orientate yourself in the text by looking at what it says. It's about asking, "What ideas come up in the text?" and "What surprises are there?"

Meaning: These questions help you try to uncover what the author means. It's about asking, "What does this section tell me about God, about Jesus, and about myself?"

Application: These questions help you to work out how to respond to the Bible's message. It's about asking, "How does this passage challenge or confirm my understanding?", "Is there something in my life that needs to change?", or "What does this passage teach me about being a follower of Jesus?"

Prayer Points Finally, there is a section to write prayer points. This way you can remember to pray for each other during and after the group meeting, and also keep track of prayers answered. Prayer and praying for each other is a very important part of Christians meeting together.

Map: The Setting of Matthew's Gospel



14 February 2016

1. BLUEPRINTS

Matthew 4:12-25

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

(take these questions to your home group and try to find some answers)

Group Bible Study - Week 1

Opening Question: If you were telling someone about Jesus, where would you start?



Ask a few people to share reading Matthew 4:12-25 for the group.

Context

1. Where has Jesus been for the last forty days? (*see Matthew 4:1-11*)

2. In v1, which ‘John’ had just been arrested, and why? (*see Matthew 14:3-5*)

Observation

3. Why does Matthew say Jesus’ choice of location to begin his ministry is significant? (v14)

4. What was Jesus message? (v17)

5. What is surprising about Simon, Andrew, James and John’s response to Jesus’ call in v19? (v20, 22)

6. How would you summarise Jesus’ ministry in v23-24?

7. Look at the map on p.7. How would you describe the extent of Jesus fame and ministry? (v23-25)

Meaning

8. Why do you think Jesus “withdrew” to a small community in the north, far away from Jerusalem, after John’s arrest? (v12)

9. Matthew connects the beginning of Jesus’ ministry with Isaiah 9:1-2 for geographical reasons, but also for other reasons. What do you think is the connection between Jesus preaching in v17, and the “great light” in v16? You might want to read Isaiah 9:1-7 for more information.

10. Why do you think Jesus accompanied his Kingdom-proclaiming ministry with “healing every disease and every affliction among the people”? (v12)

Application

11. When we share the gospel with someone, what are the basics that we ought to include?

12. Discuss this statement in the light of Jesus' ministry in v23-24:

“

“What makes Christian social involvement distinctly Christian is a commitment to reconciling the poor to God through the proclamation of the gospel.”

- p.75, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community*,

by Tim Chester and Steve Timmis © 2007

Prayer Points:

Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #1

Discuss with my group who I might be able to invite to Christianity Explored (CE) in April.

21 February 2016

2. SALT & LIGHT

Matthew 5:13-16

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

Group Bible Study - Week 2

Opening Question: How do people usually discover that you are a Christian?



Ask someone to read Matthew 5:13-16 for the group.

Context

1. Scan over Matthew ch5-7. What is the context of today's text?

Observation

2. What does Jesus call his disciples in v13 and v14?
3. What happens to salt that has lost its saltiness? (v13)
4. What is the logical thing to do with a lamp? (v15)

Meaning

5. Jesus use the images of salt to describe his followers (v13). What is salt typically used for, and why might it be a good image for followers of Jesus?

6. What kind of person is Jesus referring to when he talks about salt that has “lost its taste”? (v13)

7. What would it look like to “let your light shine before others”? (v16)

8. What is the purpose of letting our light shine before others? (v16)

Application

9. Why might we be tempted to put our light “under a basket”?

10. How could we encourage one-another to live lives that are obviously Christian to those around us?

Prayer Points:

Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #2

Pray with my group for the people
we spoke about last week

28 February 2016

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:17-20

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

Group Bible Study - Week 3



Ask someone to read Matthew 5:17-20 for the group.

Opening Question: What, would you say, qualifies someone to be called a 'good person' in the eyes of the world around us?

Context

1. What was the big idea of last week's study in the previous section (v13-16)?

Observation

2. What are "the Law and the Prophets" that Jesus is talking about? (v17)

3. What does Jesus say he has come to do with the Law? (v18)

4. What are the 'entry requirements' for the Kingdom? (v20)

5. What does Jesus mean by the word 'righteousness' in v20?

Meaning

6. Look at what Jesus does with the Law in 5:21-22 and 5:27-28. What problem does this present for those who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven (v20)?

7. What is the solution? Compare v17 with 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 10:4 and Galatians 3:10-14.

Application

8. Discuss the following statement in relation to Matthew 5:17-20.

“People don’t need to hear that they are guilty of disobeying a holy God - most people already feel bad enough about themselves. What people need to hear is that God loves them and desperately wants to show them how much he loves them.”

9. How can we be honest and clear about the righteous requirements of the gospel, but still offer good news? How might that conversation pan out?

Prayer Points:

Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #3

Make intentional contact with one of the people we've been talking about, and have a real conversation with them.

6 March 2016

4. COMPASSION

Matthew 9:35-38

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

Group Bible Study - Week 4

Opening Question: What motivates you to tell your unbelieving friends and family members about Jesus?

 Ask someone to read Matthew 9:35-38 for the group.

Context

1. Skim over Matthew ch9. What has Jesus spent most of this chapter doing?

2. Re-read Matthew 4:23-25. What is the significance of Jesus' healing ministry in his proclamation of the Kingdom?

Observation

3. Why was Jesus being followed by crowds of people? (v36, see 4:17, 23-25, 8:1-3, 18, 9:8, 33, compare with Mark 15:43 and Luke 2:25)

4. What moves Jesus to compassion for the crowd? (v36-37)

5.. In his compassion, what does Jesus tell his disciples to do? (v37-38)

Meaning

6. Read Matthew 18:26-27, Luke 10:33-34 and Luke 15:20. In all of these instances, what is the result of the compassion that is expressed?

7. Read Ezekiel 34:1-6, 11-16 and 20-24. If you're in a group, perhaps ask three people to read a section each.

a) What is significant about Jesus using the images of sheep and a shepherd, according to Ezekiel 34?

b) Who are the failed "shepherds of Israel" in the context of Matthew's gospel and Jesus' ministry? (*see also* Matthew 7:28-39 and 9:34)

c) What can we expect from Jesus, based on Ezekiel 34?

8. What does the fact that Jesus tells his disciples to pray in v38 tell you about the place of prayer in spreading gospel of the Kingdom?

Application

9. Why do we often struggle to feel a deep compassion for those who don't know Jesus?

10. How can we motivate ourselves and those around us towards more earnest prayer for the lost?

Prayer Points:

Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #4

Find a way to demonstrate distinctly Christian love
to the person you're hoping to invite to CE.

13 March 2016

5. RESPONSE

Matthew 13:1-23

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

Group Bible Study - Week 5

Opening Question: How have people responded when you have tried to tell them about Jesus?



Ask one or two people to read Matthew 13:1-23 for the group.

Context

1. Read Matthew 12:1-2, 9-15 and 22-24. What has been happening lately?

Observation

2. Summarise the parable in 13:3-9 using the table below

Type of Ground	Result

Meaning

3. What does Jesus say is the purpose of the parables? (v11-17, see also 13:34-35)

4. What does v11 imply about the way people understand “the secrets of the Kingdom? (see Matthew 11:25-27)

5. Use the table below to summarise the meaning of the different types of ground in v18-23.

<u>Type of Ground</u>	<u>Meaning</u>

Application

6. What does Jesus say we can expect when we “sow the word”?

7. How can we keep from becoming discouraged by the potential for negative responses when we tell people about Jesus?

7. Considering the possible responses to the gospel message in the parable, how might we adapt our methods in telling people about Jesus?

Prayer Points:

Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #5

Find a way to tell the person you're hoping to invite to CE about your faith in Jesus Christ.

20 March 2016

6. UNDERSTANDING

Matthew 13:24-52

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

Group Bible Study - Week 6

Opening Question: What expectations do we have of our efforts at sharing the gospel that might be unrealistic?

 Ask a couple of people to share in reading Matthew 13:24-52 for the group.

Context

1. Look back over last week's study and remind yourself of some of the key ideas.

2. Read Matthew 13:53-58. What happened immediately after Jesus had taught these parables?

Observation

3. List the parables Jesus tells in this section (v24-52).

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

4. What common introduction does Jesus give to most of these parables?

5. What are some of the common themes that you notice in these parables?

Meaning

5. In your own words, briefly explain the meaning of each parable.

The Weeds:

The Mustard Seed:

The Leaven:

The Hidden Treasure:

The Pearl:

The Net:

The Master of the House:

6. What does the parable of the weeds tell us about the time we are living in now?
(v24-30, 36-43)

Application

7. How are we perhaps prone to misunderstand the nature of the kingdom?

8. What have Jesus' parables taught you about sharing the good news of the kingdom?

(open question)

Prayer Points:

Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #6

Give the person you're planning to invite to CE a
personal invitation to CE.

10 April 2016

7. GO

Matthew 28:16-20

Sermon Notes

What is the Big Idea?

What questions do I still have?

Group Bible Study - Week 7

Opening Question: What is the goal of telling people about Jesus?



Ask someone to read Matthew 28:16-20 for the group.

Context

1. Spend some time reflecting on what you have learnt about the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom in Matthew so far.
 2. Look back over the last few chapter of Matthew's gospel (ch 26-28). What's been happening?
 3. Why were there only eleven disciples in v16? (see Matthew 27:3-10)

Observation

4. What is the basis for Jesus' command in v18? (see v17)

5. What does Jesus command his followers to do? (v18-19)

Meaning

6. Why might some have 'doubted', in v17?

7. How is v18 significant in the development of the kingdom in Matthew's gospel and in Jesus' ministry?

8. What does it mean to make disciples? (You may want to refer back to how Jesus ‘made disciples’ in passages like Matthew 4:18-22, 10:1-15, 24-25.)

9. What encouragement does Jesus give to his ‘disciple-making disciples’ in v20?

Application

10. How could we make our efforts to tell others about Jesus more about making disciples and less about just making ‘converts’?

Prayer Points:

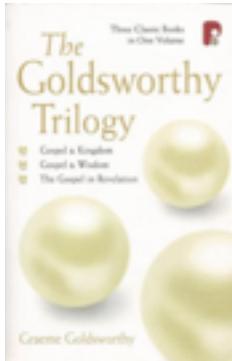
Christianity
EXPLORED

Personal Memo #7

Follow up on the invitation you gave out, and pray together for those you've invited.

Extra Resources

As a leader, you may want to do some further reading to help you lead your group well. Here are a few ideas. Some of these are also available from the Grace library near the front door. All of these books are available online from koorong.com, or bookdepository.com or from Koorong stores.

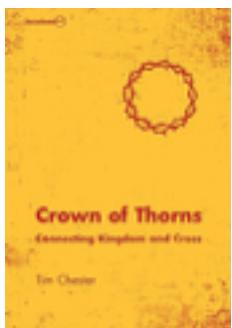
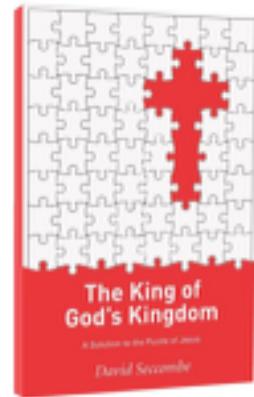


Gospel & Kingdom (in the Goldsworthy Trilogy) by Graeme Goldsworthy (© 2000, Paternoster Press)

The first book in this trilogy is rightfully a classic. Goldsworthy simply and clearly helps his readers to understand the whole story of the Bible, and where it's going: towards the Kingdom.

The King of God's Kingdom: A Solution to the Puzzle of Jesus by David Seccombe (© 2002, Paternoster Press)

New Testament scholar David Seccombe explores the Jesus of the Gospels, and the Kingdom he came to proclaim, debunking and dismantling revisionist and liberal approaches to Jesus along the way with a masterful understanding of the 1st century world.

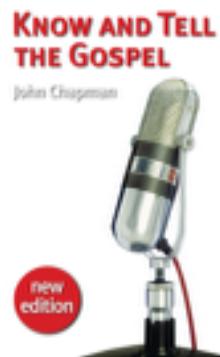


Crown of Thorns: Connecting Kingdom and Cross, by Tim Chester (© 2015, Christian Focus)

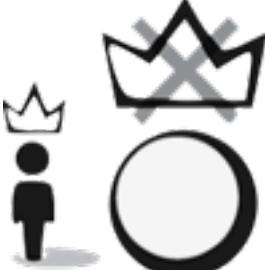
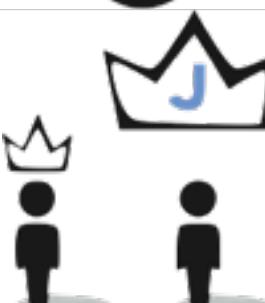
Within evangelicalism today there appear to be two contrasting gospels: one is the gospel of the kingdom with its focus on God's plan to restore the world, and the other is the gospel of the cross with its focus on the offer of forgiveness. In this book, Tim Chester shows how these two gospels are really one gospel - the message of the King who establishes justice in a surprising way.

Know and Tell the Gospel by John Chapman, (© 1998 Matthias Media)

In his characteristically friendly and engaging way, 'Chappo' provides warm encouragement, insightful biblical teaching, and a wealth of practical information on evangelism for all Christians. This new edition has been extensively revised and re-written, and contains up-to-date information and evaluation on current resources for evangelism.



Two Ways to Live (An Easy Gospel Presentation)

<u>The Bible says</u>	<u>Think about it</u>
 <p><i>“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”</i></p> <p>(Revelation 4:11 ESV)</p>	<p>• God is the loving ruler of the world • He made the world • He made us rulers of the world under him</p>
 <p><i>“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”</i></p> <p>(Romans 3:10–12 ESV)</p>	<p>But is this the way it is now?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We all reject the ruler - God - by trying to run life our own way, without him • But we fail to rule ourselves, society or the world
 <p><i>“...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...”</i></p> <p>(Hebrews 9:27 ESV)</p>	<p>• God won't let us rebel forever • God's punishment for rebellion is death and judgement</p>
 <p><i>“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God,”</i></p> <p>(1 Peter 3:18 ESV)</p>	<p>God's justice sounds hard, but...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of God's love, he sent his son into the world - the man Jesus Christ • Jesus always lived under God's rule • By dying in our place, he took our punishment and brought forgiveness
 <p><i>“According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”</i></p> <p>(1 Peter 1:3 ESV)</p>	<p>• God raised Jesus to life again as ruler of the world • Jesus has conquered death, and he now gives life • He will return as judge of all</p>
 <p>You can live your way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reject God, the rightful ruler • Try to run your life your own way <p>Which will mean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are condemned by God • You will face death and judgement 	<p>But that's not all...</p> <p>You can live God's way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit to Jesus as your ruler • Rely on Jesus' death and resurrection <p>Which will mean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are forgiven by God • You will receive eternal life

(from 'Two Ways to Live: The Choice We All Face', for more info, visit www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl/)

Coming to Grace
in April 2016:

Christianity EXPLORED

One life.
What's it all about?

www.christianityexplored.org

