

House Group Notes

16th May 2017



Ichthus Values, Characteristics & Distinctives Session 12:

Means: Words, Works and Wonders

Part 1 of 3: Words

Introduction

So far, in our series on Ichthus' values, characteristics and distinctives, we have looked at our relational (Trinitarian) God at the heart of it all, our values, our structure, our constitution, and the foundation of our theology. Over the next few weeks, we will be thinking about our "means" – essentially, this is "what we do about what we believe"!

The 3 Ws – Words, Works and Wonders

What do you think these 3 Ws actually mean? Which other words could you use to define them? In the statement on the Ichthus website, they also refer to these 3 Ws as:

Goodness

Beauty/Glory

Truth

Which Ws do you think each of these correspond with? Why?

Read the statement below taken from Ichthus' website:

MEANS: WORDS, WORKS, WONDERS.

We proclaim the good news of Jesus through our words in evangelism (truth), through the good works which we practice in the church and the community (goodness), and through the miracles and grace of healing and deliverance which we expect to flow from the church (beauty/glory). All these reveal the heart of God.

As we look at these "means" over the next few weeks, hopefully we will come to the conclusion that each one is as important as the others, that they all tie in together and that we want to see each of these means present in our own congregation.

Words/Truth

This week we are looking at words! We're going to look at three aspects of words:

1. Words in our evangelism
2. The word of God (the Bible)
3. Our words (how we speak)

Words in our evangelism

READ: Luke 4:16-19, Luke 8:1, Matthew 11:5, Matthew 24:14, Acts 5:42

There is a huge emphasis throughout the New Testament on preaching, i.e. using words! Jesus preached wherever He went, and the apostles did the same. It was a part of Jesus' purpose, and a

part of ours. We want people to see the evidence of the gospel in our lives, to “live what we preach”, but we still need to preach it!!

READ Romans 10:14 – this is obvious, but important!

Discuss: Do we see this in Ichthus? At Lee Green?

(e.g. We actively try to speak to people at church on the street, we always have a Sunday preach, often have a talk/testimony at events, ran the Jesus Course with deliberate teaching)

How could we see more of it?

What about in our own lives? Do we use our words to share Jesus with others?

The word of God

(Briefly explain that here we mean the Bible/the scriptures/the written word).

READ: Hebrews 4:12, Isaiah 40:8, Psalm 119:105, 2 Timothy 3:16.

What do these descriptions of the word of God tell us about it?

READ: Acts 2:42, Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

The church in the New Testament took the written word of God seriously!

Discuss: Do we do take the word of God seriously in Ichthus? At Lee Green? How do we see this?

(e.g. All of our teaching is based on the Bible, not our own ideas - Sunday preaches, house group studies, Startrite/Walkrite; verse of the year to guide us, Ichthus Bible School, Prayer community always has a Bible reading/discussion, Ichthus Preaching Passages aim not to pick and choose the good bits, but cover everything even when it's hard topics etc.)

Discuss: Do you take the word of God seriously in your own life? Do you understand its importance?

Our words

There is a clear challenge to preach the word, but what about our words the rest of the time? Are we consistent in the way that we speak? Matthew 12:33-35 tells us that our words reveal our character, the state of our heart. Our mouths need as much renewing as our thoughts and actions do!

Discuss: What do you think about the following instructions/warnings? How can we follow/heed them? (You can either discuss them all after reading each verse, or discuss each verse as it is read)

READ: Colossians 3:8 & 4:6, James 3:2-12, Ephesians 4:29

There lots of warnings and negative things said about words, but also some very encouraging examples of how we can use our words well!

READ: Proverbs 12:25 & 16:24, Psalm 19:14, Colossians 3:16

Hopefully we can all remember a time when someone's words brought us comfort or encouragement. Let's pray that we can do the same for each other!

Pray to finish:

- For bold, Holy Spirit-inspired words of truth and life in our evangelism and preaching
- For a deep love of the word of God, and a devotion to reading it
- For the way we speak to be positive, to be used by God to bring life to those around us