



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Introduction: This session is one of several on great themes that run through the Bible. In the book 'The Drama of Scripture' the authors write this: "Imagine that the Bible, with its 66 books, written by dozens of human authors over the course of more than 1000 years, is a grand cathedral with many rooms and levels and a variety of entrances....You can, for example, enter the Bible through one of the gospels....If you want to gather a sense of the cathedral as a whole, you face an important question: where is the main entrance, the place from which you can orient yourself to the whole? The cathedral of the Bible has many themes." By looking at its themes we can begin to get a sense of how to "enter" the Bible.

Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

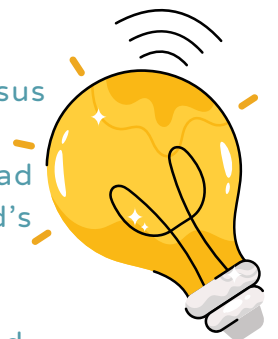
In what ways and why do you think Jesus is the "anointed one"?



Understanding the information (25 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

The four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John outline how through Jesus God was completing the task of restoring His fallen world, including His people. That plan had started with a small tribe, Israel, but the prophets had repeatedly promised it would extend to everyone and everything when God's anointed King arrived.



When this happened God would reign fully over everything again. Isaiah had prophesied that God would create a "new heavens and new earth" (65:17) and Habakkuk looked forward to the time when "...the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (2:14)

Jesus is the anointed one, the Messiah, who fulfils the story and is the Good News of God's Kingdom. Matthew begins: "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham..." (1:1)

He is rooting Jesus in the story of Israel. The Magi call Him “king of the Jews” (2:2) and He is the fulfilment of Micah’s prophecy that a “ruler” will come from Bethlehem. (2:6)

Mark begins, “The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God...” (1:1) In Luke the shepherds are told to find the baby who is “born in the city of David. He is Christ (the Greek word for Messiah) the Lord.” (2:11) Simeon and Anna recognise Him as the “Lord’s Messiah.” (2:26)

Matthew and Mark record Peter stating, “You are the Christ” (Matthew 16:16; Mark 8:16). Matthew adds “the Son of the living God.” While all of God’s people were His sons, the Jews of Jesus’ time believed the Messiah would be a son of God like the Old Testament kings. This is the sense in which Jesus in John is God’s “only Son”. (John 3:16) John locates Jesus before creation – He is the “Word of God” (1:1) and named as “God’s Chosen One” by John the Baptist. (1:34)

At His baptism, the words spoken to Jesus by God at that moment recall that He is both the anointed King spoken about in the Psalms “You are my beloved Son” (Psalm 2:7) and the servant who will suffer but will be “God’s delight” (Isaiah 42:1) in whom He is well pleased.

The gospels reveal Him as the Messiah in two other key ways in Jerusalem. All four gospels record how Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, laying claim to David’s throne, fulfilling a prophecy from Zechariah which predicted the Messiah coming to Israel’s throne in victory, and bringing God’s kingdom. He will be “...righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey...He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend...to the ends of the earth.” (Zechariah 9: 9-10). The crowds understand and use a Messianic Psalm 118 to greet Him, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.”

In Mark’s gospel, having entered the city Jesus does what a victorious king would always do by going to the Temple. The Jews expected that when the Messiah came, He would re-establish God’s throne at the centre of Israel and cleanse the Temple of **pagan influences**. But Jesus, acting as the Messiah, cleanses the Temple by judging **God’s people**. Israel was called to be a light to all nations. But they have lost this calling and instead turned the Temple into a way of separating people. Jesus acts as the Messiah, but in a way that turns the Jewish authorities against Him.

Because Jesus was not the Messiah many Jews were expecting. And for modern disciples this “Messiah” can be unexpected.

For example, the Jews hoped that God’s kingdom meant re-establishing Israel with a display of power against the Romans. But Jesus reveals it by **restoring the rejected, the unclean and the outsider**. Luke in particular draws us to Jesus as one who has come “...to seek and save what was lost.” (Luke 19:10). Jesus is focussed on restoring those rejected by society - sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, and the poor and sick – a wonderful reversal at a time when poverty and sickness were often interpreted as signs of God’s judgement against sin..

While religious authorities in particular are scandalised by the way Jesus “eats with tax collectors and sinners”, equally challenging is His demonstration of God’s kingdom restoring those who are “unclean” or non-Jewish Gentiles. In Mark 5 Jesus heals a demon-possessed man, a woman who has been bleeding internally for twelve years and raises a dead girl. Whereas previously people would have avoided being contaminated by the “uncleanness” of all three, Jesus reverses the situation as God’s kingdom comes.

Their uncleanness does not affect Him. Rather, in approaching, touching and healing them, God’s kingdom through Christ makes those who are unclean clean again.

Similarly, whereas Gentiles (non-Jews) were seen as excluded from God’s purposes, Jesus has an (at first evolving) sense that He has come for all people. The parable of the Good Samaritan is shocking in placing someone seen as an enemy by the Jews as the example of being a true neighbour. (Luke 10) Yet Jesus is not introducing anything new into God’s purposes. God’s people had always been called to care for the foreigner, and to seek justice for those who are oppressed. In prioritising the outsider Jesus is calling His people back to the original calling to be a blessing to the nations.

Jesus is a Messiah shaped by upside-down ways of living who describes those who seek God’s Kingdom first as being shaped by self-giving love, rather than power over others – even their enemies.

In the Beatitudes, a series of teachings which show the character of those who seek God’s kingdom, (Matthew 5 and Luke 6) Jesus emphasises that it is those who are humble, who know their dependence on God, who are often rejected by the world and who hunger for His kingdom who are His disciples.

In His teaching and practice Jesus emphasises that the more the Kingdom comes the more the social order is turned upside down with the last being first (Matthew 20:16), “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” being invited in (Luke 14:21) and the “tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God” ahead of those seen as religiously righteous. (Matthew 21:31)

It is John who describes how at the Last Supper Jesus demonstrates the servant-heartedness of the Kingdom, shockingly taking the role of a slave in washing His disciples’ feet and setting out a living example of a disciple’s character. “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (John 13: 14-15)

Following God’s Messiah, who changes the course of the universe, can be very different than we expect...

Discuss: What false expectations might we have of Jesus today?

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Isaiah 53: 1-3 which describes the unexpected appearance of the Messiah.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:
What does this passage teach me about God?
What does this passage teach me about people?
How does this passage call me to obey God?
What might I do in response to this this week?



Seeing how it looks in real lives (10 minutes)

There is no video, but you are invited to discuss your experience of how sometimes Jesus is better than people expect.



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

You might like to listen to the song "Give me Jesus". A four minute contemporary version with lyrics is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XASEss7ySgw>

Alternatively you might read the words as a prayer:

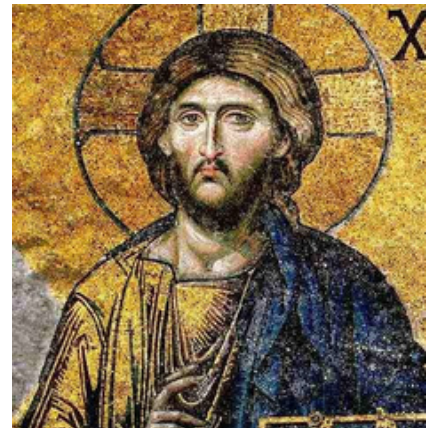
In the morning, when I rise
In the morning, when I rise
In the morning, when I rise, give me Jesus
Give me Jesus
Give me Jesus
You can have all this world
But give me Jesus
And when I am alone
Oh, and when I am alone
And when I am alone, give me Jesus
Give me Jesus
Give me Jesus

You can have all this world
But give me Jesus
And when I come to die
Oh, and when I come to die
And when I come to die, give me Jesus
Give me Jesus
Give me Jesus
You can have all this world
You can have all this world
You can have all this world
But give me Jesus



Bible Themes 10: Messiah

The four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John outline how through Jesus God was completing the task of restoring His fallen world, including His people. That plan had started with a small tribe, Israel, but the prophets had repeatedly promised it would extend to everyone and everything when God's anointed King arrived.



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