

Go...

AND MAKE DISCIPLES...

RADICAL

GO AND PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...

GO AND PROCLAIM THE KINGDOM OF GOD

small group study

LITTLE CHILDREN CAME UNTO ME...

ASK, SEEK AND KNOCK

THE RADICAL JESUS

RADICAL FOLLOWERS OF A RADICAL JESUS

I realise that the word 'radical' has many connotations especially in the history of revolution and extremism around the world. There was the 'Che' Guevara, leader of the Cuban revolution whose image still adorns many posters. He was a medical doctor who turned guerrilla and pursued change for the oppressed people of Latin America. There is the present day radicalisation of jihadists and revolutionary Islam that is sweeping many parts of the world.

Radical is more than just a person with extreme views. Jesus exercised a radical ministry that meant he stands apart from other influential leaders in the past or present. For over 2,000 years his radical life and ministry has been the cornerstone of Christianity that has circled the globe.

In our series the strap line is important because it is about application: the radical Jesus leads to an awareness of how we are called in our discipleship to be radical followers of this radical Jesus.

Through the series we will be using primarily Luke's gospel but also the other three gospels in order to focus on Jesus' radical life as the Son of God and Saviour of the World. Jesus is the one who did not come to found another religion but to enter into a relationship with men and women in order to change the world.

There will be some overlap of the small group material with Sunday morning in order to establish the continuity of teaching.

Jesus is the distinctive Son of God, the dangerous teacher of the Kingdom – the one who is radically different.

A book title I came across was *'Jesus mean and wild – the unexpected love of an untameable God'* perhaps begins to indicate the radical nature of Jesus – who overturned money changers tables in the temple, rebuked the Pharisees in no uncertain terms, whose teaching was radical like; *love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you.* Jesus is (as another writer puts it) 'the man who fits no formula' and who 'bursts the boundaries of all expectations.'

From day one in the public arena there was a distinctive radical cutting edge to his life and teaching.

STUDY 1 – RADICAL DEITY

‘Jesus may be the most popular man in history, but claiming to be the God-Man is the most controversial claim in history. It is one of the most difficult paradoxes to get our heads around. Is Jesus fully God or fully man? If he was 100% man, then surely there is no room for him to be 100% God too?’

Krish Kandiah

As part of your opening worship – Read slowly **John 1:1-18** and then respond in prayer

PLAY THE DVD

There are many images that people have of Jesus, and they have the tendency of toning Jesus down and minimising the radical cutting edge of his ministry.

Alan gave the illustration of the popular understanding of Jesus as *Gentle Jesus meek and mild* whereas the throwing out of the money changers from their buying and selling in the temple area presents a very different Jesus who was stirred to radical action. [Luke 19:45-46; Mark 11:15-17]

- What are some of the other occasions when Jesus made people extremely uncomfortable? Share those times when Jesus appears deliberately provocative.
- Why do you feel that there is a tendency to domesticate Jesus and therefore tone down the discipleship demands that he places before us?

One writer comments that the church has been ‘miniaturizing and muzzling the One who is mighty to save.’

Andrew Greeley a Catholic writer says “Once you domesticate Jesus, he isn’t there any more. The domestic Jesus may be an interesting fellow, a good friend, a loyal companion, a helpful business associate....But one thing he is certainly not: the Jesus of the New Testament. Once Jesus conforms to your agenda, he’s not Jesus anymore.’

In thinking about Radical Deity – we have to stand back with a sense of wonder at all that God has done in coming into this world. As John puts it in his opening sentence *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*

Alan spoke about how there is a more important event than the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and that was, what happened 9 months earlier in Nazareth. Luke 1:31-32 *You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David.*

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The paternity of Jesus was God himself.

- Why is it that people are ok talking about Jesus as a good man, a moral example, an inspirational figure, a compassionate healer and much more, but the moment you speak of Jesus as God – there is growing resistance?
- Take a few moments to look at Peter's reaction to a miracle in his own boat recorded in **Luke 5:1-11** and especially v8. What happened to Peter that caused him to respond in this way?

The deity of Jesus is declared by

God, at Jesus' baptism ...*this is my beloved Son*

Jesus said *he that has seen me has seen the Father.*

Demons affirmed that Jesus was *the Holy One of God – the Son of God.*

Others in the Bible affirm through their own experience *my Lord and my God.*

Radical deity affirms the two natures of Jesus – 100% man, 100% God.

Jesus is the Son of God but also God the Son.

- In speaking about Jesus' deity – what are the radical implications for us today?

Alan suggested a few areas of personal challenges.

- Radical Deity existed before Bethlehem, in all eternity past, and it was through him the universe came into being.
- Radical Deity is the only one to follow, all other gods are no gods and their worship is idolatry.
- Radical Deity means he is our sinless Saviour and therefore the perfect mediator to reconcile us to God.
- Radical Deity is our compassionate friend, for he has lived our kind of life in his incarnation. We receive His righteousness and the full and complete acceptance of the Father.

Jesus has always been God – there was never a time when he was not God but there was a time when he became incarnate. In doing so, Jesus did not cease to be God, he did not relinquish any of his divine attributes.

We need to embrace a BIG view of this Radical Jesus who is radical in his deity and face the implications of what it means to be followers of such a radical leader.

STUDY 2 – RADICAL BAPTISM

I am writing this a few weeks before Christmas. And my gardening magazines have arrived, and on the cover of one of them it says, "9 pages of festive gardeners' gifts"! Then when you look at the 'stuff' that they suggest you find all sorts of knick-knacks at various prices (and some rather expensive) of things that you would put in the garden shed and then forget about 'till next Christmas! What a waste of money! But today our study is about a gift that once received will never wear out, and that will be essential throughout eternity. It is the gift of real LIFE that Jesus made known to us all when He was baptised so many years ago.

Baptism, the act of entering the water, dying to Self, and being raised again to New Life in the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The 'Baptism of Repentance' that Jesus went through (even though He had no need of repentance), because He was prepared to identify with you and me and all the needs that we have. There is so much symbolism, so many threads of exciting discovery in the fact that Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity and the Son of God, walked this earth and entered the dirty muddy waters of the river Jordan to embrace and encompass all of our need and all of our sinfulness. An act that was joyously approved by God the Father, and honoured by the presence of God the Holy Spirit. The fact that all three Persons of the Godhead were so involved in this event must surely make us look twice, and even three or four times more, at this story - because there is so much to discover.

We will look at just a couple of these exciting threads, and I leave you to dig deeper and find out as many more.

READ. Luke chapter 3 v 21 following.

(There are also other accounts in Matt. 3:13-17 and Mark 1:9-11)

PLAY THE DVD.

FOR YOUR DISCUSSIONS.

1. How many permanent decisions do we have to make during our lifetimes? Make a list of those you can think of, and note against each one whether or not they could be altered or rescinded. You may be surprised at the result. Discuss your findings against Christ's decision to become incarnate in the Babe in Bethlehem.
2. How difficult do you think it was for the Son of God to make that transforming decision? And - putting yourselves in His place - could you ever consider doing anything as drastic? Discuss why you believe He (and the Godhead) made that decision.

3. How do you think John the Baptist would cope in today's world? Try to imagine what he might look and act like if he was to appear here in Ashford in the 21st Century.

4. Mavis spoke of the two kinds of baptism that was (and is) practiced by the Jews. Did you know about the Mikvah? For your interest, did you realise that Jewish women even today have to enter the Mikvah each month after their period, otherwise they are ritually unclean and unable to minister to their families! Remember the woman with an "issue of blood" that Jesus healed? She had to go to the Temple and use the Mikvah before she could be accepted as "clean". Think about and discuss all the implications of the Law (the Halachah) that New Life in Jesus has freed us from. Give thanks together for that freedom.

5. But Jesus' baptism was not in a Mikvah, it was the Baptism of Repentance that covered, not simply the Jewish people that watched on the bank of the river Jordan, but also all of us outside the Jewish Faith who need to be accepted by God as well. Have you ever thought of this aspect of this story before? Discuss

6. When we delve deeply into the life of Jesus of Nazareth we are astounded that God, in Christ, has covered every possible circumstance in life that might exclude us from His gracious mercy. Nothing has been left to chance! The enemy can have no objection to our acceptance in the Beloved. Why not write a group Psalm of praise to God for His amazing far-sightedness!

FOR YOUR INTEREST.

In her talk, Mavis mentioned that the Jews are planning to build the third Temple in Jerusalem, that they already have architect plans, priests robes and an altar of sacrifice. There is also a "virtual video" so that visitors can "walk through" that Temple.

Follow the Link - www.templeinstitute.org - you will find it fascinating.

PRAYER

Father God, how can we ever really thank You for all of Your provision for us. Forgive our ignorance when we don't fully appreciate that every tiny detail of our salvation has been covered in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ. Holy Spirit open our understanding and help us to seek closer and deeper, so that we might begin to scratch the surface of all that You have done for us in Christ Jesus. Thank You: Amen.

STUDY 3: RADICAL MANIFESTO

Prayer - Worship prayer

This is just between you and God and no need to share with the rest of the group... Take a sheet of A4 and write these three phrases on the piece of paper (with space to write answers!):

- One thing you would like to say to God.
- One thing you want to ask God.
- One thing that God wants to say to you.

Before you play a worship song, tell people that whilst the song plays they have an opportunity to have a heart to heart with God. During the song they are encouraged to write down something they would like to say to God, something they would like to know and something that comes to mind that God is saying to them.

In today's session we are going to be looking at a declaration that Jesus made which contained God's heart, God's ethos and God's intention for mankind – a radical manifesto.

READ LUKE 4:14-30 then **READ** ISAIAH 61:1-2

Having read these texts can you spot the difference?

Q. Can you comment on the significance of this difference?

PLAY THE DVD

Discussion

It's very clear that the teaching of Jesus and the rest of the Bible is that there is a heaven and hell. Jesus was also clear that he was here to save people from entering hell in the afterlife.

Q. Is there ever a situation where it is right to say to someone that they are going to hell?

Take a look at the meeting that Jesus has with a woman in John 4:1-26, 4:39-42. What is clear from this encounter is that Jesus was very aware of the sins the woman is committing, yet his approach was to first identify the spiritual hunger that this woman had for God and to draw it out.

Judgement vs grace

Q. Do you think Christians sometimes have the tendency to let what they are against get in the way of loving people?

Q. If we're in a day of favour and not vengeance then does this mean that those who attribute natural disasters to an "act of God" are wrong?

Q. Could you imagine what would happen if Christians using the internet only posted positive comments on social media such as Facebook and Twitter?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you

Jesus was bringing in a different mind-set to one that the religious leaders and the (Jews themselves) were used to; a kingdom mind-set, a New Testament mind-set. One of favour to those who don't deserve it and who have not rightful claim to it – you and me!

Sometimes we can think that God's blessing and favour is just for Christians, but that God's judgement is for the godless.

Q. Does what you have heard help reinforce anything for you in terms of the way we view those whose lifestyles are undesirable?

Year of Jubilee

So this mandate, where the poor will be provided for, the broken hearted are healed and find joy, and the enslaved get set free from being controlled is a mandate of favour for the unfortunate, love for the unlovely. Jesus said in Matthew 4:3-5, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted, blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth..."

We've been given a radical mandate, and we've been given the Holy Spirit to bless others according to this mandate.

Q. Does this do anything for your faith in praying for those who need God's favour, knowing that it is God's will that we do these things?

Prayer

Lord Jesus. Help me to be a part of implementing this radical manifesto to others. Your love is so lavish that you died for the ungodly. You came for the sinners and not for the righteous. Amen!

Study 4 RADICAL MIRACLES

Recommended readings:

Luke 17: 18 – 22, Matthew 10: 1 – 8, John: 14: 11 – 14

Introduction

This week we will be talking about miracles and the role they played in Jesus' ministry as well as their relevance for us today. I recommend you start by reading the above recommended bible verses and then **watch the DVD**.

Sharing experiences

On the DVD I shared a bit of my personal journey. Perhaps you could start by sharing with each other some of your own personal journeys. Perhaps you have experienced a miracle healing yourself, or saw this happening to somebody very close to you. We can really encourage each other by sharing these sorts of experiences.

Discussion

There are other times when we desperately need God to intervene in a miraculous way, but when it doesn't seem to happen. Our prayers appear not to be answered.

Have you ever had such an experience? How did it feel? How did you deal with it?

What wisdom can you share with the others in terms of dealing with these kinds of situations?

I have listed below a number of Bible verses that give us some clues why God doesn't always answer our prayers for healing, but that in spite of that we can still find rest and peace in Him. I suggest you read these verses together and discuss what can be learned from each of them.

2 Corinthians 12: 7 – 10: What does Paul say when he doesn't get healed even after asking God several times to do so?

John 9: 1 – 3: What does Jesus say about the man who had been born blind?

Matthew 17: 14 – 20: What does Jesus say about the link between healing and faith?

Roman 8: 28 – 39: What comfort does Paul give us?

In my DVD talk I suggested that Jesus primarily used miracles to 'underwrite' his message that the Kingdom of God was near and had come with Him. Through his miracles He showed us glimpses of what that Kingdom would look like: no more sickness, no more pain. I suggested that this might be a

reason why radical miracles appear to happen more often on the mission field or during times of revival. It is at those times that we are completely focused on Jesus and His kingdom. Would you agree with this? Can you think of other reasons why miracles appear not to happen as often as they seemed to appear during the time of Jesus and the Apostles?

Some (often charismatic) churches put a lot of emphasis on miracles.

What do you think about this?

Please discuss both the positives and the potential dangers?

Do you feel that in WBC we are putting the right emphasis on miracles?

If not, is there anything we could/should do differently?

Prayer

Please spend time together in prayer. Especially if somebody within your group is in need of prayer and needs God's healing touch, please pray together for that person, perhaps with laying hands on that person. Please also pray for others in WBC that are not well at this moment and ask God to heal them.

Study 5 RADICAL TEACHING

In this study we are going to look at two parables Jesus told, one in Matthew and one in Luke, and whilst they share many common features they are not the same and the differences are as important as the similarities. In the scriptures, we frequently see Jesus grounding His teaching in things that would have been well known to His listeners. Why is it important that we do the same today? What peculiar challenges does this present us with?

Read Matthew 25: 14-30 and Luke 19: 11-27.

Make a list of the similarities and differences between these two parables – they will be important in our thinking later on.

Play the DVD.

The DVD ended with the words ‘commendation or condemnation’ – and it is certainly true that some servants were commended and others condemned – but we need to remember some essential truths in thinking about this:

We are saved by grace to do good works, not because of them.

Jesus came to set us free, not to have us fearfully looking over our shoulders wondering if we are doing enough. However this should not make us complacent.

It is important to understand the nature of the gifts being discussed here. The sums given to the servants would have been the totality of their resources – they had nothing else. When we think of ‘gifts’ in relation to ourselves it encompasses everything God has blessed us with – our natural talent, all our resources and our spiritual gifts.

Have you ever looked at another Christian and thought, I wish I was like them or, I wish I could do what they do?

These parables teach us subtly different responses to such desires.

Looking at the parable of the talents in Matthew, where each servant is given a different sum, what does this teach us as a response to such thoughts?

Looking at the parable of the minas, where each servant is given the same sum, what does this teach us differently about such desires?

We have spent some time in the recent past analysing what our individual

gifts might be and how we could come to recognise them so, unless you feel it particularly important to do so in the context of your group, I do not intend that we repeat such exercises.

What is clear is that everyone gets something?

Why is it important that we recognise this?

These parables clearly teach us that God expects us to fully utilise the gifts that we have been given and that upon Christ's return we will be called to account for the use we have made of them. Our 'reward' will be commensurate with the use we have made of the gifts we have been given. If we have been given much, much will be expected.

Why do you think we spend so little time in our Christian lives thinking about this aspect of heaven? How might doing so change our response to the call of God in our lives now?

Finally, we do need to touch upon the totally unproductive servant. As said on the DVD how to interpret this causes sincere disagreement amongst Christians. One view, which I share, is that this teaches, along with other passages of scripture, that we can by our own deliberate actions lose our salvation. It is done not by mistake but by a deliberate conscious act of will. A different view is that of 'once saved always saved' irrespective of our actions. You will individually have to arrive at your own conclusion through prayer, reading the works of others and studying the bible. Moreover, unless you intend to set about being the unproductive servant, it is not important today! What is important here is that both views recognise that the fate of the unproductive servant is not a pleasant one. These passages remind us that there are sticks as well as carrots in the Kingdom of God. It is most certainly not all standing around with harps and halos!

A thought to reflect upon.

6: RADICAL PRAYER

The observation of many regarding Jesus, was that he had a radical cutting edge especially in his relationship with God. Jesus expressed a high view of God but what challenged the disciples particularly was, the intimacy observed in seeing and hearing him pray. In fact Jesus did not give formal teaching on prayer, but he did pray and the disciples had 'hands on' teaching about prayer through seeing the Master praying. It was then that his followers saw prayer from a whole new perspective.

PLAY THE DVD

Luke in his gospel particularly emphasises Jesus' life of prayer. The disciples were deeply impressed, excited by observing Jesus praying. You could in your own time note the key occasions in Jesus' life and how they were accompanied by specific prayer ie. Gethsemane prayer before his arrest and the cross.

In **Luke 4:38** Jesus is in Capernaum where he had a very strong following. It was here that Simon Peter's mother in law who was one of many who were healed through Jesus' ministry.

Note how the disciples reacted the following day, v.42.

- What do you think were the underlying motives for the disciples looking for Jesus?
- What is the significance of a solitary place for Jesus? Why is it that we struggle to find let alone enjoy, a 'solitary place'?
- Talk in your group about the way Jesus was guided as a result of praying and how v.43 expresses specific guidance to what the disciples wanted Jesus to do.

Our busyness can shut God out if we are not careful.

Dean Vaughan 'Many a Christian worker's activities are the grave of his spiritual life.'

The request of the disciples was very specific in **Luke 11:1 *Lord teach us to pray.*** Jesus' own example in praying stirred the disciples to be aware of their somewhat inadequate praying.

This is where we have the 'Lord's Prayer', or as it should be called the 'Disciple's Prayer.' In this prayer there are specific areas that become for us a helpful framework for our own regular praying.

Pause in your group to say the **LORD'S PRAYER** together...after each key phrase ponder the radical nature of the prayer and unlock the rich resource of this prayer for us today. There is a short video clip 'Teach us to pray' that reflects on the Lord's Prayer that can be used.

[Luke has the short version, Matthew 6:9-13 for the longer version].

Father, hallowed be your name [The name of God to be revered]
Your kingdom come [The rule of God to be established]
Give us each day our daily bread [Daily provision]
Forgive us our sins as we forgive everyone who sins against us
[Daily pardon]
And lead us not into temptation [Daily protection]

There are several parables that Jesus told highlighting the power of prayer.

THE FRIEND WHO ARRIVES AT YOUR HOME AT MIDNIGHT (Lk 11:5-13) and he has have no food in the cupboard and so he goes next door in order to borrow some when they are all asleep in bed.

- In what ways do you think Jesus captured the attention of his hearers with this parable?
- What does this teach us about persistence in prayer? Can anyone in the group share testimony about praying for something very specific and not giving up.
- Alan spoke about being shameless or audacious in our praying. Who else in the scriptures illustrates this aspect of radical prayer.

Ponder together the challenge in **Lk 11.9-10** about asking, seeking and knocking. The verbs are in the continuous tense emphasising the need for continuous, believing, trusting prayer.

Jesus continues to make the contrast between an earthly father and our heavenly father and how much more we can trust God, v.11-13.

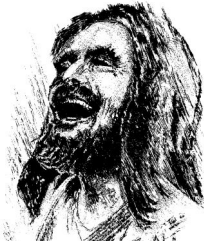
The second parable that was mentioned is in **Luke 18** and the **PERSISTENT WIDOW**. This widow was seeking justice from a very unhelpful and ungodly judge.

I can imagine Jesus' hearer perhaps putting a name to a face, knowing full well that there were many unscrupulous judges who lined their own pockets. The widow pesters him continually for justice - and eventually he gives in simply because he is just tired of hearing her voice.

- Again there is the continuing challenge about praying and not giving up. What are some of the reasons that we give up.

I like the episode where Elijah [**1 Kings 18:42-44**] has just called down fire from heaven on the sacrifices that challenged the prophets of Baal. Remember how he believed the long awaited rains would come and he sends his servant up the Mountain in order to look for the dark clouds. Again and again he went and came back with a negative sighting but Elijah sent him again and on the seventh time - he returned declaring that there was a cloud as big as a man's hand.

Study 7: RADICAL COMMITMENT



"What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it." From 'That Hideous Strength' by C. S. Lewis.

When we commit to someone we need to know that they are worthy of that commitment. When we think about that great Radical Commitment that Jesus demands of us, then we need to know, love and trust absolutely the Lord we are committing to. Why, then, do we tend to hang onto the sugar-sweet sentimental Jesus that was so prevalent during Victorian times? Why does the general populace 'see' Jesus as some 'soppy' weak "gentle Jesus meek and mild"? Oh, Yes, He is gentle, meek and mild, but that's just a tiny part of His glorious character. He is not like the pictures we tend to see in church windows or in old oil paintings; lifeless, loose and floppy lying in the disciples arms "dead as a doornail" as He is taken down from the cross.

He is risen! He is alive! Vitally, joyfully, powerfully alive. He **IS** life! He is the only One Who can give us Life, because He invented it! If we want to really LIVE, really experience what genuine LIFE is all about, then He is the one to go to; because He promises us **LIFE IN ALL IT'S ABUNDANCE!**

That's what this week's study is all about! JESUS! The Christ, the Eternal Son of God! The One and only Lord of this universe, Who has stooped so low as to ask you and me to commit our lives to Him! What an honour!

READ. Matthew 13 v 44 - 46; Matthew 25 v 1 - 13; Revelation 1 v 10 - 18.

NOW WATCH THE DVD.

TO THINK ABOUT.

*"All of our hopes and dreams of immortality, our fond visions of a life to come, are summed up in these simple words in the Bible record: **HE CAME!** I suppose it is the editor nature within me to note that I am impressed with the fact that these two one-syllable words occupy only seven spaces in a printed line. But what these two words tell us is more profound than all of philosophy, and I am not using the superlative carelessly in this context.*

*There are times when the use of the superlative is absolutely necessary and you cannot escape it. The coming of Jesus Christ into this world represents a truth more profound than all of philosophy, for all of the great thinkers of the world together could never produce anything that could even remotely approach the wonder and the profundity disclosed in the message of these words, **HE CAME!***

From "Christ the Eternal Son" by A. W. Tozer.

"Remember that in God's eye there is only Christ, not things. He sees neither affairs nor things, He only beholds Christ.According to our worldly viewpoint, there are affairs here and matters there; but according to God's estimate - Christ is all. Christ is all and He is in all. And that will be the day when the eternal purpose of God shall be fulfilled." From "Christ the Sum of all Spiritual Things" by Watchman Nee.

TO DO. Let's look at those four things Mavis suggested on the DVD.

1. Let's try to get to know Jesus better. How can we do this? What measures can we each put in place within our daily lives that will enable and encourage us to get to know Him better?

2. Let's recognise that He isn't a long-faced uninterested God, but that He is the most JOYFUL Being in the universe, and that He is very interested in each of us. Discuss this concept. How have you visualised Jesus in the past? How do you 'see' Him now? What kind of Jesus would you be prepared to commit to today?

3. Let's be enthusiastic about our relationship with Him. That's how others will be drawn to Him. They won't be drawn to you and me, only the presence of Jesus will attract them.

Discuss how we can do this at WBC. Are we really enthusiastic about our Lord? Is it Jesus Himself Who takes first place in our church life; or can we, perhaps, get so involved in 'stuff' (meetings, plans etc. etc.) that He can get sidetracked?

4. Let's embrace the whole idea of being Radically Committed to the most exciting, joyous and exhilarating Being in the whole universe.

How could we cement our Radical Commitment to Jesus? Can you think of ways of making this commitment 'concrete'? Perhaps making a vow to one another, or writing our commitment out and putting it in our Bibles. Discuss what you could do as individuals or as a group.

If you have committed to Christ in this way, what exactly have you committed to? Well, Paul makes it clear just what that commitment means: -

Philippians chapter 3 v 7 - 11. "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith....."

TO PRAY. Lord Jesus Christ; May we be strengthened with power through Your Spirit within us. May You dwell in our hearts through faith, and may we be rooted and established in love so that we may understand the width, length, height and depth of Your love for us. Help us to truly grasp just how joyous You are, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God and the abundant Life that You have promised us. Now to Him Who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, to Him be glory forever and ever, Amen.

Study 8: RADICAL COMPASSION

This study looks at Jesus' radical compassion. In particular, how we can live our transformed lives showing this same compassion in our community, country and world today.

There is some smaller group work later – you will need a pen and paper!

Let's start in prayer, ask God to reveal new things about his radical nature.

INTRODUCTION:

What does compassion mean to you? In your group, share experiences where you have received or witnessed compassion.

WATCH THE DVD (*make sure you pause it and read the passage when it tells you to!*)

RESPONDING TO NEED:

What appeals have you seen recently on TV, public transport, online or on billboards? How did you feel and what did you do when you saw them?

In the video, Ben talks about the “Deserving” and “Undeserving”. Read Matthew 10:8, 25:34-40 and Luke 14:12-14 – what is God saying to you about his view of where our compassion should be shown? There are a number of different people in need mentioned – what are the modern day equivalents?

In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, Paul talks about believers living idle lives and in 1 Timothy 5:3-10 mentions widows and their families. What do you think is meant in these passages? – how does showing compassion align with these verses?

In Acts 3:44-46 & 4:34-35 the early church where a sharing church ensuring that need was met - how does the modern church and specifically WBC compare to this?

What was the outcome experienced within the early church through this compassion?

“SMALLER GROUP” ACTIVITY:

Thinking about the types of people mentioned in the Parable of the Good

Samaritan; split into 4 (smaller) groups and to each of them, assign one of the four areas of poverty that were mentioned in the video: Economical (Poor), Relational (Widows), Aspirational (Fatherless) and Spiritual (Lost).

In your smaller group, for your area of poverty, who are the modern-day victims (you may have given some examples earlier), exploiters, risk-adverse, organisers & businessmen

Try to think of three scenarios / take about 15 minutes.

For example, for Economical poverty:

<i>Victim</i>	<i>Exploiter</i>	<i>Risk-Adverse</i>	<i>Organiser</i>	<i>Business-man</i>
<i>The unemployed</i>	<i>Loan sharks</i>	<i>Banks</i>	<i>Benefit Systems</i>	<i>Landlords</i>

When you are all ready, share these with the larger group and also consider: If the Good Samaritan walked by, what would he do to help the victims?

OUR RESPONSE:

Jesus said "Yes, now go and do the same" Luke 10:37b

Jesus gives us a clear mandate to show his form of radical compassion in our local community, country and the world today. However he also taught that this would not be easy!

Read Matthew 9:35-38 & 10:5-20

- What is God asking us to do?
- How will God equip us?
- What are the dangers?
- Why should we do it?

The WBC vision statement is:

“By December 2016, as a committed, spiritually maturing and integrated family, we will be seeing many people coming to faith and being added to the church, through our practical demonstration of God’s love.”

Our outpouring of radical compassion is integral to God's vision being fulfilled for WBC. The exciting thing is that through showing God's love through compassion, we, like the early church will see people coming to faith! Hallelujah!

Note here how you will respond to what God has been prompting you through this study:

As an Individual	As a Small Group	As a Church Family

Willesborough Baptist Church
Small Group Study Notes Studies 1-8

January to April 2016

RADICAL JESUS

The DVD introduction to the study series together with these study notes is brought to you by:
Alan Dinnie, Mavis Gibbs, Keith Gwilym, Chris Lukkien,
Paul Martin & Ben Smith.

Study 1	Radical Deity	Alan
Study 2	Radical Baptism	Mavis
Study 3	Radical Manifesto	Paul
Study 4	Radical Miracles	Chris
Study 5	Radical Teaching	Keith
Study 6	Radical Prayer	Alan
Study 7	Radical Commitment	Mavis
Study 8	Radical Compassion	Ben

The series is complemented by the Sunday sermons that

Alan will be preaching on Radical Jesus.

If you missed a particular Sunday you can always listen to the message or download the message from the Church website

www.wbc-ashford