

Week four, Tool No. 4 - Living out of beliefs (practical action)

(...proclaim the good news by word and deed, serving Christ in all people ... work for justice and peace... live and work for the kingdom of God)

Following the example of Jesus, and his mission, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me to proclaim ..." As well as responding to the way in which God sets an example by not being a remote absent parent, but instead living as a human being and part of creation. Faith lives through deeds, and we grow in relationship with God by putting it into practice.

This is good news. It should not be a burden. God has made all things possible through Jesus Christ: it is beneficial for us to participate in the process of making it happen. "On earth as it is in heaven".

However, there is a difference between good and bad. Every choice we make will influence which Kingdom we live in; where do we form our values? Do our lives express our values, and when we speak are we recognisable as Christians?

The last three sessions have been designed to help you think about some of the things which can help us live like this. This session is a chance to practically think through some examples.

How did Jesus go about doing it?

Lived with people

Met them where they needed help

Gave the credit to his Father

Didn't back down or compromise one scrap of the law, (Mark 2:27) but reserved his harshest criticism for those who commanded obedience to the law without compassion (Luke 11:46, John 1: 17)

Worked in community, but outward facing. If he retreated to the hills it was usually to prepare for going out into the crowds, or sending people out in pairs to find people of peace and live in community.

How can you "live and work for the kingdom of God".

What examples of people working for the kingdom can you think of?

(Ministry, medical profession, social services, being the person who looks out for other people?)

Living as the kingdom?

(Prayer, gathering for worship, examining your beliefs and putting them into practice, letting other people know where you stand, and overcoming the fear of rejection by those who don't identify with the kingdom)

How could you describe the kingdom of God if someone asked you what it is?

(Creeds, community of faith, way to find meaning and direction for your life, life beyond and without fear of death)

Remember week 1?

Check the references to see if you agree with our interpretation

(Luke 4:18-21,

Jesus quoting Isaiah)

The Lord's prayer, Matthew 6, verses 9 - 13

Matthew 5:17

John 13.35

How not to do it!

Mark 12:38-40

Try this instead:

Mark 9:35

Mark 6:7-13

Mark 16:15-20

Proclaim the good news by word and deed

How will people know if there is no one to tell them? If something excited you, or you think it's good you tell your friends.

You are telling them anyway, sometimes it's a matter of how effective you are at communication.

Why do we meet together?

To go back to the start of these meetings: Why do we meet together? To support each other, but also to support each other to go out and live.

You will have the opportunity to affirm your faith. It is important to remember that this is a start as well as an end. It's great to have met with you here, but you are not affirming faith in St John's, or the choir or your favourite pew. These exist as props to help you live the life that your brothers and sisters, the choir, St John's and the whole communion of saints have faith in your ability to live through Jesus.

¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. (John 1)