

Lost for Words – Questions...?

Welcome

Briefly share with one another how you currently **feel** about having meaningful conversations with people about life or faith.

Worship

We'll use the words of this song (video to be played on shared screen) as inspiration for opening prayer. Think about **the truths** it declares that you'd want your family, friends, neighbours or work colleagues to know for themselves...

By grace alone somehow I stand
Where even angels fear to tread
Invited by redeeming love
Before the throne of God above
He pulls me close with nail-scarred hands
Into His everlasting arms

When condemnation grips my heart
And satan tempts me to despair
I hear the voice that scatters fear
The Great I Am The Lord is here
Oh praise the One who fights for me
And shields my soul eternally

*Boldly I approach your throne
Blameless now I'm running home
By your blood I come
Welcomed as your own
Into the arms of majesty*

Behold the bright and risen Son
More beauty than this world has known
I'm face to face with love Himself
His perfect spotless righteousness
A thousand years, a thousand tongues
Are not enough to sing His praise
Bridge

This is the art of celebration
Knowing we're free from condemnation
Oh praise the One, praise the One
Who made an end to all my sin.

Questions

Every week we have some opportunities to invest in conversations where in different ways, people are **questioning life in general**. Within such conversations, we find that more overtly faith-based questions can also arise. Which category of questions do you feel most at ease about engaging with at the moment and why is that?

- What's life all about?
- How do I cope with the sense I have that I'm on my own or empty?
- Who am I?
- How can I cope with the things I regret having done?
- Where can I find true happiness?
- What is real love?
- What's really true?
- Why are there so many religions? How can one be true?
- What about all the negative events in Christianity's history?
- Hasn't science disproved God?
- If God's so good, why do people suffer?
- Isn't being a Christian just about being good?
- What about heaven and hell, isn't it all fantasy?
- How can you base your life on the Bible, isn't it just a load of stories?

Remembering the role of Prayer

- a) Read **Colossians 4: 2-6**. Share with each other in your own words: why is prayer so vital when we're faced with life or faith-based questions?

- b) How do you feel about telling someone you don't know the answer if you don't know it, and then asking to arrange a time to talk about it properly, once you've had time to look into the answers?

Character for engaging with Questions

- a) Let's remind ourselves of **2 Timothy 1: 7**. Those 3 gifts help us to grow in Christ-like character, which we need to be doing if we're going to be effective in evangelism. In what ways would we see ourselves as wanting to grow in these 3 gifts? How can we see this happen?
- b) God's Holy Spirit leads us to answer people's questions in ways that: 1) point them to Jesus, 2) sound believable, 3) connects with what they are *really* asking, and 4) sounds caring. Which of these do you think comes more naturally to you and which do you find more challenging? Why? How can we move forward in these areas?
- c) No matter how much info we cover and how coherently we manage conversations, no fruit will be born unless people see Jesus' life and love at work through how we draw alongside them. What do you think it looks like to share the gospel in love? What examples can you think of where Jesus modelled this for us? Which Christians who've shared the gospel with love and gentleness in church history come to mind? (e.g. Wesley brothers, William Booth...).

Four Tools for Exploring Questions

1. **Discernment:** What do you notice about how Jesus inspires his followers in **Mark 13: 1-8** to ask a question that is of spiritual and eternal significance? How do we currently go about being discerning in our conversations

when questions about life or faith arise? What might we do to make sure we're growing in listening to God as we explore people's questions with them?

2. **Explaining the gospel:** We need to memorise key verses that help us to develop how we do this. Yet we also need to explain what the gospel is **from our hearts in our own words**.
- How would you explain the gospel in 1) one sentence, 2) a few minutes. Think about a few different contexts each week you are in (e.g. in the Asda queue, out with friends for a drink, with family at home, or over lunch with work colleagues).
3. **Imparting relevant knowledge and evidence:** The truth of scripture is shown by how it coherently tells the story of salvation history. There is also a wealth of historical evidence outside of the Bible for Jesus (see: <https://www.bethinking.org/jesus/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources>). For example, the Roman historian Tacitus, Jewish historian Josephus, the Roman governor Pliny and others wrote about Jesus and his followers. How are we inspired and encouraged by the historical basis for our faith in Jesus?
4. **Our personal experience of Jesus:** What difference does Jesus make to each of **us**? How might we share this with people we know who haven't heard it yet? Thinking about those we've already spoken to about how Jesus influences our lives, what else would we like to share?

To close: Spend a few minutes in prayer thanking God for the privilege of taking part in evangelism. Ask for God's help with embracing people's questions wholeheartedly.