

## Know your story. (Week 2)

*... no longer infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching... (Ephesians 4:14)*

**God has spoken you don't have to work it out for yourself.**

There is a Creator. Creation involved ordering things that are opposite to one another: Light and dark, earth and sky, land and sea, men and women.

We are creatures made in the image of God

Creation teaches us things about God.

Eg Psalm 19:1,2. Psalm 104:14-18

*Now if we ponder to what end God created food, we shall see that he meant not only to provide for necessity but also for delight and good cheer.... In grasses, trees and fruits, apart from their various uses, there is beauty of appearance and pleasantness of odour..... Did he not in short render many things attractive to us apart from their necessary use?*

The world we live in doesn't just work. It proclaims Gods goodness

The distinction between men and women reflects the distinction between God and human beings. The coming together of a man and a woman in marriage is a reflection of Gods desire for us to be united with him. And this is now possible through Christ.

**We have exchanged service in Gods world for gods who promise to give us what we want.**

Sin has affected the entire system.

Sin affects us physically and psychologically. Above all it affects our hearts. It shapes what we want and desire.

Because we struggle in some area doesn't mean the cause is necessarily rooted in some bad choices we ourselves have made.

In the first chapter of his letter to the Romans Paul writes of those who suppress the truth about God that comes through creation.

He goes on: *Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.*

When we don't worship the true God we find ourselves looking for other things to worship. And sex turns out to be a major contender.

But idols don't deliver.

- The promise of the sexual revolution: more and better sex.

Oxford statistician David Spiegelhalter has written an authoritative, easy to digest guide to what we know about people's sex lives today.

*"At this rate of decline ... a simple but extremely naïve, extrapolation would predict that by 2040 the average person will not be having any sex at all. I rather*

*suspect that this will not be the case but it still leaves the crucial question: why is there less sex going on.”*

- Marriage, divorce and co-habitation.

The effect of the ‘revolution’ on children.

Successful families that offer great outcomes for children come in all shapes and sizes.

Between 2004 - 2014 co-habiting couples grew by 29.7%

More than half of couples who only get married after the birth of their first child have split up 10 years later. This compares with a quarter of couples who have got married before having children.

And where couples don’t marry at all two thirds will split up

48% of all children born today will not be found living with their natural parents by their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

- Pornography

Its how young people get their sex education

It provides no defence against the notion that casual sex is acceptable so long as its done ‘safely’

The trouble with worshipping idols is it leads to addiction.

**Jesus Christ has come to fix the problem and he is in the restoration business.**

Jesus is the image of the invisible God. He is the perfect man. The last Adam.

He is the Lord’s servant who lives in submission to the will of his Father.

Jesus does not come to promote an agenda of self fulfilment. He calls us to deny ourselves and take up our cross. This is the restoration process.

*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father..... (Matt 10:34)*

2 Illustrations:

Nabeel Qareshi: Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus

Rosaria Butterfield: Openness Unhindered.

Both these people have abandoned what comes to them by nature for something bigger, more important and better.

*Peter spoke up. We have left everything to follow you. Truly I tell you Jesus replied, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age..... And in the age to come eternal life (Mark 10:28-30)*

**The gift of sex points beyond itself to life in the new creation.**

The last book in the Bible presents the return of Christ in terms of a wedding.

In Genesis, the gift of sex functions in a relationship of rich companionship and deep unity.

When sin enters the world companionship is an early casualty.

- The new creation is a place of completeness.

*Just as we have borne the image of the earthly man so we shall bear the image of the heavenly man. (1 Cor 15:49)*

This will involve our bodies. See 1 Cor 15:42-44

- The new creation is a place of consummation.

Christ will present the Church to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

- All needs will be met
- All questions will be answered
- God will be enjoyed eternally.

**Questions of Sexuality: standing firm in the storm.**