

# Preparing for Profession of Faith

## Session 1

### Introduction:

*Why have you come along to this group / course?*

*What do you think a profession of faith is about?*

*What do you think it takes to be ready to do a profession of faith?*

### Why a profession of faith?

Is a profession of faith in the Bible?

Romans 10:9-11. We are to:

Confess with our mouths "Jesus is Lord"

Believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead

Promise made: You will be saved

A profession of faith is a public statement about an reality

### What a profession of faith doesn't do:

- Doesn't create a relationship with Jesus
- Doesn't make a relationship with Jesus stronger
- Doesn't guarantee that my life will become easier
- Doesn't signify having 'made it' as a Christian

## **Romans 1:1-3:20 – Why we need Jesus**

Read verses 16-17

Gospel:

Salvation:

Righteousness:

Faith:

*What is the main theme of the letter?*

### The BIG problem:

Read verses 18-23

According to verse 18, what is our big problem?

What are the reasons for this? (Check out verses 20, 21 and 23)

*How do we see these things in our own life?*

*How do we see them in our world?*

*Do we often think about God as angry, or wrathful?*

Can we be good enough?

Read 2:1-5

According to verse 1, is there any advantage in knowing right from wrong?

According to verse 5, what is the real problem?

*How much do you think we rely on our 'goodness' to make God love us?*

*What is this saying about that goodness and how much it counts?*

What about being religious?

Read 2:17-24

What is wrong with 'relying on the law' and 'bragging about our relationship with God'?

In what ways might we try and do that?

Read 3:9-10 and 20

Is there any advantages in being brought up with 'religion'?

*How do all of these things make you feel?*

*Do you think we try to rely on goodness, or religion? Why or why not?*

*Why do you think Paul starts off this letter in such a depressing way?*

Total Depravity: Every single part of our life and world has been so impacted by sin that there is nothing worthy about us that causes God to save us, and no possible way that we can make a move towards God.

*If we are going to be saved (made righteous) what part are we going to play in that? Where does it have to come from?*

## Session Two

*Can you describe a time when you felt completely hopeless? Why was that? What happened when you got to that point?*

### Romans 1:1-3:20 – Summary

- Romans is a letter from Paul, to the church in Rome, where he spells out the gospel – how we are to be made right with God, through faith.
- 1:18 - Our big problem is that God's wrath (right anger against sin) is being revealed from heaven against ungodliness
- 2:1-5 – Worse news still – knowing the difference between right and wrong, doesn't make us right
- 2:17-24 – Worse news again – being brought up, or becoming, 'religious' doesn't help us one little bit
- 3:9-10 – Summary – we are all under sin, there is no one who is righteous

Total Depravity: Every single part of our life and world has been so impacted by sin that there is nothing worthy about us that causes God to save us, and no possible way that we can make a move towards God.

### Romans 3:21-30

Verses 21 - 22:

- Righteousness –
- From God (twice) –
- Apart from the law –
- To which the law and the prophets testify –
- Through faith in Jesus – to all who believe –

### Three pictures of salvation:

- Justified
  - Picture is from the law court
  - A guilty person is declared 'not guilty' by the judge
  - How is this possible for guilty people with a right judge?
- Redemption
  - Picture is from the slave market
  - A slave price is paid, and the slave can go free
  - Who is the slave, and what is the price paid
- Sacrifice of Atonement
  - Picture is from the temple
  - A sacrifice is made, so that the anger of God will be removed
  - Is God really angry? What is the sacrifice?

*What do these images say about:*

*US?*

*God the Father?*

*Jesus the Son*

Verses 25-26 – God’s justice

**Through Faith**

Verses 22, 27, 28, 30, 31

Faith is the only way that righteousness can be given to us:

The Heidelberg Catechism – Q&A 60 and 61

What is faith?

Where does faith come from?

- Ephesians 2:8
- Philippians 1:29
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-14
- John 3:5
- Romans 10:17

Faith is a gift, that comes by the Holy Spirit, and through the Word

**Commitment #1: Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour**

*I profess that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour, and I want to follow and serve him as his disciple. I believe that he is the Son of God sent to redeem the world. I love and trust him as the one who saves me from my sin; I continue to turn from my rebellion against my Lord, and embrace him as the Lord of my life with repentance and joy.*

What I believe:

Jesus is the Son of God

Jesus was sent to redeem the world

He saves me from my sin

What I feel:

I love him

I trust him

I find my joy in him

What I do:

I follow and serve him as a disciple

I turn from sin and embrace him as Lord

*I am ready to profess my faith when:*

*I know, understand and believe the gospel*

*I am in a living relationship with Jesus*

*I am growing in faith, love and obedience*



## Session Three

### Romans 1:1-3:20 – Summary

- 1:18 - Our big problem is that God's wrath (right anger against sin) is being revealed from heaven against ungodliness
- 3:9-10 – We are all under sin, there is no one who is righteous

### Romans 3:21-31 – Summary

- God has made a way to be made righteous
- Jesus – justified, redemption, atonement
- Righteousness that is by faith

### **Romans 4 - Righteousness by Faith**

Romans 4:3 – The way it always was

Romans 4:11-12 – The same way for the Jews (circumcised) and the rest (uncircumcised)

Romans 4:22-25 – By faith God credits to me righteousness

### Where does faith come from?

- Ephesians 2:8
- Philippians 1:29
- 1 Corinthians 2:10-14
- John 3:5
- Romans 10:17

Faith is a gift, that comes by the Holy Spirit, and through the Word

*So if we want to grow in faith – how should we go about that?*

### Election

- Ephesians 1:4-5
- Romans 8:30
- Canons of Dort 1. Articles 7 and 9

How the doctrine of election is used in the Bible:

- To give Christians assurance, because salvation lies with God who is faithful
- To give glory to God, because from start to finish, salvation is his work
- Never to exclude people from the gospel

- Never to insight hopelessness

*How should the doctrine of election be used? How should it not be used?*

*What is the alternative to election?*

### **Romans 5:1-11 - What is ours by Faith**

#### Peace with God

- A living relationship with God
- Prayer
- Eternal hope

#### Joy

- A real lasting joy
- That even is present in suffering

#### Hope

- For eternity
- No matter what our experiences

#### Love

- From God – that is not based on my performance / goodness
- Assured in us by the Holy Spirit

Everything that we struggle with is answered in the gospel – the peace, joy, hope and love that is ours through faith.

### **Commitment #2: I believe the Bible and the teachings of this church**

*I acknowledge that the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, summarised in the Apostle's Creed and our Confessions, and taught in this Christian church, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation.*

#### **Group Discussion:**

- *If we are saved by faith, does it matter if we live in obedience to God?*
- *Why do you think we are always tempted to place more importance on our obedience, and less on faith in Christ?*

- *How does understanding election make you feel? How does it give us greater assurance of faith? How does it work against our pride? Why does it mean more glory to God?*
- *What are some of the things that people your age struggle with? How does knowing that we have peace, joy, hope and love from God help us with these struggles?*



## Session Four

### **Commitment #3: Accepting the promises of God made at my baptism**

*I accept the gracious promises of God sealed to me in my baptism and affirm my union with Christ and His church which baptism signifies*

Promises made to us by God at our baptism:

- We are part of his covenant family of faith and all the blessings of that
  - Hearing the gospel
  - Seeing Christian life lived out
  - People who love us and care for us
- If we repent and believe then we will be saved

Profession of faith is about accepting and receiving those promises of God as our own, and not just because we belong to a Christian family.

### **Profession of Faith Statement #4:**

*I promise to do all I can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen my love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in its means of grace, honouring and submitting to its supervision and discipline, and I join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord wherever I am.*

### **Sharing faithfully in its means of grace**

- Means of grace – the way in which God grows his people
- Through the preaching of the Word and the sacraments
  - Sacraments as the Word demonstrated

Preaching of the Word

- I put myself in places where I can continue to hear the Word
  - Sunday Services
  - Branch Youth / Home Groups
  - 1-2-1 Bible studies
- I am committed to growing as I read, hear and study the Word – putting it into practise

Sacraments

- I participate in Lord's Supper and Baptism

*How important is it to be at Sunday Services regularly?*

*Could you say "I read the Bible lots at home, I don't really need to go to church?"*

*How do participating in the sacraments help us to grow as Christians?*

## Honouring and Submitting to its Supervision and Discipline

- We support and respond to the work of the elders in the church
- We support the work of leaders of ministries that we are involved in

### Supervision

- I prayerfully participate in the election of elders in the church
  - Looking for men who fit the biblical criteria for eldership
- I pray for the elders of the church
- I submit to the leadership of the elders in the church

### Discipline

- I watch my own life and beliefs closely
- I participate in mutual accountability within the church
- I respect the direction and discipline that comes from the elders

*What should you do if you disagree with something the elders decide?*

*How can you help make the work of elders and leaders a joy and not a burden?*

*What should we do if we see another member of the church dishonouring Christ in the way they live?*

## Join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord wherever I am

- We are all part of the mission of Jesus together
- Ministry is not to be done alone, or by a few, it is shared by the whole church

### Serving

- I will use my God given gifts for the benefit of the church
  - Serving wherever need arises
  - Serving in ministries in the church

### Unity

- I will help protect the unity of the church
  - Refusing to gossip or slander
  - Sorting out differences quickly
  - Being on the lookout for those who are on the outer

### Money

- I will help contribute financially to the work of the church
  - As God enables us to do
  - Making sure our priorities are reflected in our budget

## Mission

- I will play an active part in the church's gospel work in the community and world
  - Warmly promoting the church where I can
  - Praying for the work of the gospel
  - Loving others and sharing my faith

*What should we do if we have a 'falling out' with someone else in the church?*

*What are some of the ways that you would like to serve in the church?*

*What ministry opportunities excite you in the wider community and world?*