

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## SIMPLES OR CONFUSED?

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6TH JULY 2021

A few years ago, more than 30 actually, I sat in a lecture for my degree. It was a Monday morning and I had overslept and been on the last minute arriving, but managed to sit down before the lecture began. This is relevant as I hadn't checked my timetable on the subject matter. As the morning progressed I was taking in the information but it was all new to me. To my surprise, some other students were actually raising their hand to contribute to the discussion, like they knew what the subject matter was all about. I had at most a tenuous grasp of the points made and was madly trying to keep up with it all. After a coffee break, the lecture continued. I was still none the wiser, trying to play catch up with the string of thoughts and was beginning to be concerned that I wasn't up to this level of learning. By the end of the morning I was totally confused and when I found my timetable I was shocked to discover that I had actually listened to two totally different subjects: psychology and sociology. And I was so lost that I hadn't even realised!

This was not a good position to be in. Following that, I did work hard, and passed my degree but it always stayed with me, how confusing some subject matter can be, especially when new information is thrown your way, or there is a presumption that 'you already know this' so the basic information that sets the context, is missed out altogether. And I won't even try to explain the philosophy lecture. I think I just gave up on that one- not my thing at all!

I now work with children who are deaf. They often struggle with a similar problem – having to piece together information without all the vital elements available, following a rapid conversation with lots of new vocabulary where it just doesn't make sense. For example, what sort of table is the teacher talking about? One that we use with a chair or one that contains data?

So, why the stories about confusion? Well, In Matthew 9 it says:

35 Jesus travelled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

The bible often uses the analogy of people being like sheep, following the crowd, feeling a bit lost, needing someone to give us some direction and guidelines. And at some time or other it is clear that we are prone to confusion because we just don't understand.

In John 3 there is a recount of when Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader, who was confused by what he saw in Jesus. On the one hand, Nicodemus knew the religious scriptures and the law of Moses. He knew the theory. On the other hand, he recognised something more in Jesus and said: "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." Yet he needed Jesus to answer his questions about how to believe and trust in Him. He was searching for the truth but he did this in secret, at night, as he had a lot to lose. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, wealthy and in a prominent position.

The eventual outcome of this searching was that Nicodemus was one of those who took Jesus' body down from the cross and laid it in the tomb. Read this in John 19. He was no longer in secret or questioning the validity of Jesus. This was a big deal for a Pharisee.

It's not a pleasant feeling when you can't get a grasp of something that you feel is important. You don't want something to feel 'as clear as mud'. It's much better to feel as if it is 'as clear as crystal'.

The essence of the bible is simple but often we can't see the wood for the trees' as we are distracted by extra details. Paul sets out the message of the bible in his letter to the churches in Rome, and after introducing himself, says:

2 God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the holy Scriptures. 3 The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, 4 and he was shown to be[a] the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit.[b] He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul linked the events of the Old Testament with the prophecies of a Messiah, with the new Testament arrival of Jesus, giving an overview of God's plan. This was

very important to the early church believers, as many of them would have been taught the scriptures. He was placing Jesus in context, as part of God's plan for his world. Jesus was questioned by a religious leader of how to gain eternal life and, in his answer, Jesus simplified the numerous and often onerous laws into two clear elements. In Luke 10 it says:

"What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?"

27 The man answered, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"[c]

28 "Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"

In Colossians 1 we are told that Jesus is the link between heaven and earth:

For God in all his fullness

was pleased to live in Christ,

20 and through him God reconciled

everything to himself.

He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth

by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

And in Romans 8, we are told that God's love connects with us through Jesus and that can never be broken: 38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[p] neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are not meant to go through life confused. We should ask questions, get support from others who have a good understanding, read the simple truths in the bible and put our trust in Jesus. Then we can know and believe and trust as Nicodemus did, understanding the clear message:

16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave[g] his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.



*Coach House Church*

222 Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 2QN  
leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604  
Registered charity in England and Wales - 1194822



**Melanie Jackson**

Events Coordinator // Trustee  
melaniej@coachhousechurch.org