

The background of the slide features a stack of books on the right side, with a blurred background of more books. The books in the stack have spines of various colors: a blue one at the top, a black one with gold lettering, a yellow one, and a red one at the bottom. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

4

Comfortable Words

Four studies in Cranmer's
words of gospel assurance

Welcome to “4 Comfortable Words”

Thomas Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury during the early tumultuous years of the English Reformation. A brilliant scholar and vastly well-read academic, Cranmer wrote the Book of Common Prayer (first published in 1549 and later revised) to lay down a form for services in churches in England. The BCP is filled with the words of Scripture; The Word of God accounts for more than half of the order for corporate worship.

In the communion service, after God’s people have heard the words of assurance reminding them of the forgiveness of sin and rebellion through the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus, four brief passages of comfort and assurance are read out. These words offer comfort, not in the modern sense of ease and relaxation, but by stirring us up to press on in the Christian life, assured of forgiveness, even though we’ve ignored God and thrown off his pattern for life. Such is the power and wonder of the gospel of Jesus!

© 2014 - 2019 Clayton Fopp
www.ClaytonFopp.com



This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Unported License. You are free to share, copy, distribute, transmit or adapt this work, under the following conditions: This work is identified as the source. You may not use this work for commercial purposes. For full licence terms and more information about Creative Commons, please visit www.creativecommons.org

“Rest”

Matthew 11:28

1. Recall an important lesson you learnt as a child. Why does it remain in your memory even now?
2. What’s the most physically demanding task you’ve ever take part in?
3. In what circumstances do you find the Christian life most difficult?

Read Matthew 11:25 - 30

4. What differences can you think of between how a child typically approaches God, and how adults tend to?
5. How does a person come into relationship with God according to Jesus’ words here?
6. What does this section teach us about our salvation?

- 7.** “Rest” was part of God’s provision to his people Israel under the Old Covenant. How does their experience of rest help us understand what Jesus offers us here?

- 8.** Compared to rest for God’s people in the Old Testament, what is new in the rest that Jesus offers?

- 9.** How does Jesus’ promise in verse 28 depend on what he has said in the earlier verses of this section?

- 10.** Why is Jesus able to offer a kind of rest we cannot find anywhere else?

- 11.** What has to happen for us to enjoy eternal rest from Jesus?

- 12.** How can we be sure that Jesus really can offer the rest that he promises us here?

- 13.** Jesus offers his “yoke” (v 29) indicating that the rest he offers is of a kind that refreshes us to engage in his work. How is this different to the kind of rest we’re often tempted to seek?

- 14.** “Yoke” is typically used in the New Testament to symbolise submission (ie Acts, 15:10, Galatians 5:1, submission to the law) and yet Jesus says “my yoke is easy” (v 30). How is it that submission to Jesus can be described in these terms?

- 15.** Considering Jesus’ words in verses 27 – 30, how would you describe the rest he offers?

- 16.** In what circumstances of life do you need to hear these “comfortable words” from Jesus the most?

- 17.** What do you need to do when you are feeling “weary and burdened”?

“Gave”

John 3:16

1. What’s the best or most memorable gift you’ve ever received?
2. What are some of the ways that people think they can be in a right relationship with God?
3. What truth do you find hardest to believe?

Read John 2:23 – 3:16

4. John often uses imagery of “night” (v 2) to picture people in spiritual darkness (ie 9:4, 11:10, 13:30). What, then, is the significance of the timing of this encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus?
5. How do the last verses of chapter 2 help us understand Nicodemus’ approach to Jesus?
6. How does the means of relationship with God that Jesus explains in verse 16 differ to what people often expect?

7. What would you say are the key elements of the statement in verse 16?

Read Numbers 21:4 - 9

8. How did the bronze snake save people?
9. In what ways is Jesus' death on the cross a parallel and fulfilment of the lifting up of the bronze snake?
10. What does Jesus' death achieve that the bronze snake could not?
11. What does it mean to believe in Jesus?
Is there a minimum amount of belief required?
Are there certain aspects that must be believed?

12. How does this section offer a correction to:

- Those who trust their efforts to gain a right relationship with God?

- Those who think Jesus was simply a worker of miraculous signs, or a wise teacher?

13. From these verses, what would you say is God's motivation for his actions for salvation?

14. How do these verses help us pray for people we care about who don't know Jesus?

15. What do we learn about our friends and family who don't know Jesus in these verses?

16. Write John 3:16 in your own words.

“Save”

1 Timothy 1:15

- 1.** Have you ever been rescued?
What kind of trouble were you in?

- 2.** Think of people you know who would call themselves “religious” or “spiritual.” How would they define a “sinner”?
What about your friends and family who don’t identify as religious in any way. What definition would they give?

Read 1 Timothy 1:12 - 17

- 3.** To what degree do your prayers of thanksgiving reflect Paul’s thanksgiving here?

- 4.** Compare the actions of God in these verses with the actions of Paul himself. What do you notice?

- 5.** How is Paul able to say that “faith and love” have been “poured out on me” (v 14)?

- 6.** Whether someone sins in ignorance, or willfully, what does this passage say they must do to be saved from sin’s consequences?

- 7.** Paul's trustworthy saying (one of five he includes in the Pastoral Epistles) "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" is a brief summary of the gospel message.
- What elements of the gospel does it include?

 - What elements of the gospel are omitted?
- 8.** How do we often view our own sins relative to the sins of others?
- 9.** What does Paul's use of the present tense to describe his sinfulness remind us about our Christian life?
- 10.** What reason for salvation does Paul outline here?
- 11.** How do we see Christ's patience displayed?
- 12.** In what ways does the grace of God in Christ transform our lives?

- 13.** What might change in the way we live if we deliberately sought to use our lives as a demonstration of Christ's work in us?

- 14.** What are some of the ways that Christianity is different to the self-help or self-improvement programs we encounter today?

- 15.** A friend asks you, "How does Jesus save?" How do you respond?

- 16.** What does this verse say to people who don't think they need saving?

- 17.** What does Paul's "trustworthy saying" remind us about our friends and family who don't know Jesus?

“Advocate”

1 John 2:1

- 1.** Have you ever been in total darkness?
What did you feel and observe?
- 2.** Do you tend to be someone who asks for help early, or do you press on without asking for assistance?
- 3.** Describe a time when someone intervened on your behalf to secure an outcome you couldn't on your own.

Read 1 John 1:5 - 2:2

- 4.** The Apostle John wants his readers to guard against sin. What sin does he seem to be particularly warning them against?
- 5.** In what ways do we face temptation to this same sin today?
- 6.** What does it look like to “walk in the light?”

- 7.** Make a list of all the works of Christ from which we benefit in these verses.

- 8.** John is writing to Christian people. Why do we need an advocate if we've already been forgiven?

- 9.** John's word for "advocate" can carry the sense of a legal representative acting for us in court. What aspects of this role does Jesus perform for us?

- 10.** In the context of Jesus advocating for us, why is it significant that he can be called "the Righteous One"?

- 11.** How can Jesus' death be described as "for our sins"?

- 12.** John speaks of Jesus as "the atoning sacrifice" (v 12), a reference to the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16. How is Jesus the fulfilment of this Old Testament provision and practice?

- 13.** How is Jesus' sacrifice better than the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement?

ClaytonFopp.com