

# Basic Christianity

*Five weeks exploring the foundations of the faith*



*Rooted: Sunday, 7-8pm, 14 April – 12 May 2024*

*Teaching, then Q&A.*

*All welcome. All questions welcome!*

# Basic Christianity



- Five weeks to explore the foundations
- A suggestion to read a gospel along the way
- Baptism or confirmation?
- Cantonese *Christianity Explored*
- Who could you share your faith with this week?

# Five big questions:



1. *How can we know about God?*
  - *Revelation: God speaks to humanity in Jesus, and in his Word.*
2. *When did it all start?*
  - *Roots: God made us to know him.*
3. *Why did it go wrong?*
  - *Rebellion: we did it our way, otherwise known as sin.*
4. *Who will save us?*
  - *Rescue: God sends Jesus to be our Saviour.*
5. *What does the future hold?*
  - *Renewal or ruin? Heaven and hell are coming.*

# Basic Christianity

Revelation  
(week 1)

Rebellion  
(week 3)



Ruin

Roots  
(week 2)

Rescue  
(week 4)

Renewal  
(week 5)



# Basic Christianity

Revelation  
(week 1)

Rebellion  
(week 3)



Ruin

Roots  
(week 2)

Rescue  
(week 4)

Renewal  
(week 5)



# What is our biggest problem?



- According to a survey by BBC World, the top five problems facing humankind are:
  - *global superpowers (ie the strength of the United States and large corporations),*
  - *corruption,*
  - *conflicts,*
  - *hunger, and*
  - *climate change.*
- *(Not everyone took it seriously: one man voted for cricket!)*

**B B C** WORLD

# What is our biggest problem?



- Look at the common factor in each answer:
  - *superpowers*      *people can't be trusted with power*
  - *corruption*      *people abuse privilege and position*
  - *conflicts*      *people are warlike*
  - *hunger*      *people are selfish*
  - *climate change*      *people abuse the planet*
- A simple survey reveals the problem: us!
  - *The Times once asked, "What's Wrong with the World?"*
  - *GK Chesterton wrote: "Dear Sir, I am, sincerely yours ..."*

# Why did it go wrong?



- **Rebellion:** we did it our way, otherwise known as sin.
  - *Adam and Eve's sin sets the pattern. They reject God's word, and receive God's curse.*
  - *Like them, we are all sinners. All of us. No exceptions. None!*
  - *Jesus' teaching should convince those who know their own hearts. We don't love God or other people perfectly.*
  - *The biggest problem facing humanity is not the mess we've made on earth – it's God's judgement that will come on us all.*



# The original sin: Adam and Eve



- God gave a clear command to Adam:
  - *‘you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’ (Genesis 2.17)*
- The serpent perverts God’s word, and makes disobedience seem attractive:
  - *“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3.4-5)*

# The original sin: Adam and Eve

- Eve and then Adam reject God's word ...
  - *and so his rightful authority.*
  - *They now decide right and wrong.*
- The consequences are profound:
  - *Shame (nakedness, and hiding from God) and recrimination*
  - *God curses the serpent, the woman and the man: now there will be conflict (vertical and horizontal; spiritual and relational), frustration, banishment from God's presence – and so death.*
- Creation has been inverted.



# The unoriginal sin: you and me



- Adam and Eve wanted it their way ... and so do we.
- Ever since Eden, sin has been:
  - *the desire to be our own God – we want to choose good and evil.*
  - *the defiant, personal rejection of the Creator’s rightful rule.*
  - *universal – we all imitate Adam and Eve:*
    - *“There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no-one who does good, not even one. ... There is no fear of God before their eyes. ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...” (Romans 3.10-23)*

# The unoriginal sin: you and me



- Jesus is (shockingly) realistic – even as he holds out hope:
  - *“If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7.11)*
- Can it really be that we are *evil*? That no-one is righteous? Not even one?

# The measure of sin: love



- Jesus said:
  - *“The most important [commandment] ... is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*  
(Mark 12.29-31)
- How do you measure up against this standard?

**In the Bible, God's laws (or  
"commandments") are the target**



Now turn the law into an aeroplane ...



**... and try to hit the target.**







**Even if we  
try really  
hard ...**

**... we quickly find that “all have  
sinned and fall short ...”**

# The measure of sin: love



- Of course, we make excuses:
  - *Sin doesn't matter:*
    - *“If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.” (1 John 1.6)*
  - *Only other people's sin matters:*
    - *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (v8)*
  - *If I redefine sin, surprisingly (!) I find I am not a sinner:*
    - *“If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (v10)*

# The wages of sin: death



- How does God view our sin?
- God's response to our rebellion is death.
  - *We are like Adam – and God hasn't changed.*
    - *God warned Adam that disobedience would mean death: it still does.*
    - *It also brought frustration, conflict, toil and pain: and it still does.*
  - *“The wages of sin is death ...” (Romans 6.23).*

# The wages of sin: death



- But death is more than physical:
  - *Sin says to God, ‘I don’t want you’.*
  - *In judgement, God gives us what we ask for.*
    - *“God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts ...”*  
*(Romans 1.24, 26, 28)*
  - *Ultimately, this means separation from him who gives us life and all good things: judgement means an eternal, Godless death.*
    - *The unrighteous will be “punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power”*  
*(2 Thessalonians 1.9).*

# Why did it go wrong?



- **Rebellion:** we did it our way, otherwise known as sin.
  - *Adam and Eve's sin sets the pattern. They reject God's word, and receive God's curse.*
  - *Like them, we are all sinners. All of us. No exceptions. None!*
  - *Jesus' teaching should convince those who know their own hearts. We don't love God or other people perfectly.*
  - *The biggest problem facing humanity is not the mess we've made on earth – it's God's judgement that will come on us all.*

# A bleak picture



- Is it wise to sing, ‘I did it my way’?
- Don’t miss next week:
  - *Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Mk 2.17)*
  - *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6.23)*

# Basic Christianity

Revelation  
(week 1)

Rebellion  
(week 3)



Ruin

Roots  
(week 2)

Rescue  
(week 4)

Renewal  
(week 5)



