

The METHOD

Restoring your Ministry

That CHRIST is preached | Phil. 1.15-18

1. Start with weekly catch ups/ any normal introductory activity.
2. You can either run some games, or active activities Whatever suits best.
3. Key verse: Phil 1.15-18
Read through and gather any general thoughts, questions, observations etc. note these down, but don't feel the need to explain or elaborate on any contributions.

Philippians 1:15-18 (NIV)

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,

Some context/notes:

- Paul is in prison during the writing of this letter
- He is responding to 'believers' who are living sinfully on purpose – in a way to show off that they are free while he is locked up.
- **He values the gospel even more highly than the attitude of those who preach it**
- God can override motive and hypocrisy to fulfil His will – i.e. God can, and does, use anyone

Activity:

Have a listen to/look at the lyrics of some of the songs from Kayne's *Jesus is King*. You can split up into groups/pairs, give them a song each to listen to and look over the lyrics. Get each group to explain the theme and messages of the song.

Questions:

1. How might *Jesus is King* relate to the reading?
2. What feelings might the Church have in response to this album? (Positive and Negative) Why?

3. What feelings might non-believers have in response to this album i.e. pop culture, secular world etc.? Why?
4. It's possible that this album might reach more non-believers than any church could ever hope to reach. Is that a good thing or a bad thing and what does that say about the church today? Explain your view.
5. How do we live out the teaching Paul offers in this text? How do we rejoice that Christ is preached when its preached by someone we may not agree with/like/support?
6. How do we avoid being the Christians Paul is writing to and adopt more of the mindset Paul has from his prison cell?

Some Thoughts:

These thoughts are provided as a guide. Feel free to do your own study and research and mould to your own context.

This past November, rap music mogul Kanye West released his first full Gospel Album. The album, titled *Jesus is King*, is an open declaration of his new found faith and his attempt to creatively express it. West, who is a household name alongside wife Kim Kardashian-West and her famous family, has developed a reputation over the last decade and a half of grabbing headlines and drawing the attention of millions of people around the world through peculiar antics and outlandish statements. There's no doubt that past actions from the Kardashian-West's in the public eye can appear somewhat questionable at best. They are certainly not everybody's 'cup of tea' but they no doubt have a huge scope of influence over people – particularly those deeply entrenched in the age of social media and pop culture.

So what should we make of *Jesus is King*? How do we respond when a mega rap star with a colourful past suddenly uses his profile to spread the same Good News we are called to live by and live out?

Jesus is King draws Paul's writing from prison in Philippians 1 about Christ being preached to the forefront. In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul suggests that 'the important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached.' (Phil 1. 18). Whilst listening to *Jesus is King*, it seems clear that Christ is being preached indeed through this project. When examining the lyrics of the album, this is reinforced. In the track *Selah* for example, the end of the first verse says;

"Won't be in bondage to any man -John 8:33 – We the descendants of Abraham – Ye should be made free – John 8:36 – To whom the son set free is free indeed – He saved a wretch like me"

Lyrics like this are consistently found throughout the album. From tracks like *Use this Gospel* to *Everything We Need*, it is clear this album is not intended to be about a Kanye West at all but rather the subject of his lyric and rhythm.

It is worth noting that this is an album released for the masses, which debuted number 1 on the American Billboard 200 Chart. That's not just Christian or gospel charts, but number 1

alongside all popular, 'worldly' music as well. Music about money, possessions, sex, drugs, selfish ambition, joy and sorrow. *Jesus is King* literally sits at the top.

It could be suggested that any church around the world would clamour to occupy the same position. A position where the realities of the Christ we know may penetrate the sometimes seemingly impenetrable world outside of the walls of a church building. For many people, they may catch a glimpse of the Good News through this project before they ever even consider walking through the doors of a church on a Sunday morning. That's a sobering reality for us to consider when thinking about how effective the Church is in today's world at meeting people where they are. As I recently heard one minister from our church remark - "There are more followers of Christ outside of the church than there are inside of it."

So what might our youth be able to take from all this? Drawing back to Paul's writing, the challenge for us is avoid being the people Paul is writing to – a section of opposing fellow-believers tormenting his imprisonment – and rather adopt the mindset of Paul himself from the confines of his prison cell. If we are to build and nurture strong faith relationships for young people in our church and faith communities, they will be able to rejoice when Christ is preached. Even more so when in places that Christ is not often preached with the same vigour and influence of that of Kanye West. It doesn't mean we aren't to be weary of motive and truth. But it does give us an opportunity to explore our Christianity in strange new found territory.

Does that make Kanye West a Christian example all young people could follow? I truthfully couldn't say. But does an album written about Gods transforming love by a human being on a faith journey give us an opportunity to rejoice? Perhaps it does.

