

The Lost Message of Paul

small group series

Part 1: Understanding Paul

1.

Do you agree with Steve that faith evolves and, if so, how has your faith evolved or changed over time?

2.

Steve says that the Church needs to be able to hold 'a gracious conversation' around the nature of our faith. Why do you think this can be difficult for us?

3.

If it is true that a text without context is a pretext – what do you think we can do to ensure that we are reading the apostle Paul's work more authentically?

4.

What is your view of Paul? Why do you think that he has such a bad reputation with so many people? (Perhaps read the story of Howard Thurman at the start of chapter two).

What do you think actually happened to Saul/Paul on the Damascus road? What do you think it means when we read that Jesus spoke to Paul? How does God speak to you?

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Part 2: Works, faith and faithfulness

1

By the time of Martin Luther, the medieval Church had developed a system of control and power, with Hell being the ultimate threat to those who violated it. Do our churches today create their own systems of control and power? If so, what might they be?

2

3

4

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Part 4: Wrath, Hell and judgement

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Part 5: The Kingdom of Heaven

1. Steve says that our understanding of Heaven has often been influenced by art and poetry rather than the Bible. Can you think of any ways that our culture has influenced our understanding or expectation of Heaven?
2. How would focusing on bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to the 'here and now' impact the way we live our lives?
3. How would focusing on bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to the 'here and now' impact the way we do church and mission?
4. Steve explains that the New Testament only gives us signposts to life beyond death. Therefore, how much should it be a focus of attention in our churches? Should we focus more on life before death, than life after it?
5. Steve says that Paul believed Jesus will ultimately save or rescue everyone through his faithfulness. Do you agree or disagree, and why?

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Part 6: So what's the point in it all?

1.

If 'everyone is in' what do you think is the purpose of church, mission and evangelism?

2.

3.