

GBC LIFE GROUP RESOURCES 2025

Series: Lives Changed by Jesus

Introduction to GBC Life Group Resources

Life Groups are a critical ministry of our life together at Gynea Baptist Church where we want everyone to find their place in God's family and in God's mission. These resources are produced each Monday as a companion to the sermon series. Choosing to use these resources facilitates our sense of community as we share together around common themes and passages.

Each week's resource includes a brief overview of the sermon series and of the sermon (which can be accessed on GBC's YouTube channel or via your favourite podcast platform), along with a series of activities to do together. Don't forget that The Big Ill podcast comes out mid-week as another companion to the sermon.

These range from questions to ask, prayers to pray, practices to try, and biblical passages to read (usually in the time between Life Group meetings). Feel free to pick and choose what will work well for your group – you don't have to do everything!

We also include additional things that we are encouraging our Life Group leaders, as leaders of GBC, to be sharing with your groups. These include reflecting on a particular mission commitment of GBC, promoting and praying for GBC initiatives, and celebrating what God is doing in and through our community of faith.

If you have feedback on these resources please contact Nicole Jones at LifeGroups@gymeabaptist.org.au.



Lives Changed by Jesus: A Brief Introduction

This is our theme for 2025 and we will be returning to it several times over the course of the year. The theme is grounded in our strategic priorities of Community Engagement and Spiritual Journey and seeks to focus on the ongoing conversion we experience as followers of Jesus.

In this first sermon series, we will be focusing on characteristics that demonstrate a life changed by Jesus.

A Brief Overview of This Week's Sermon

Key Text(s): Romans 6:1-14

On Sunday we celebrated lives changed by Jesus with four baptisms! Four young women from our community of faith spoke briefly about their journey of faith and their decision to be baptised. If you were there or have watched the service on YouTube, I'm sure you were encouraged.

Baptism, unlike the other practices we have been exploring, is not something we do continually. However, we do seek to live out the commitments that we make when we are baptised: to place our faith in Jesus, to turn from sin, and to remain part of the body of Christ. As such, we had a look at a passage in Romans where Paul urges his readers – who are believers – to take sin seriously.

The dominant metaphor Paul uses to describe a believer's relationship to sin is death. We, who have placed our faith in Christ, are dead to sin. Paul uses words like "dead", "death", and "died" in nearly every verse in this section! And the point he is making is clear. Just as those who have died no longer sin, so those who are dead to sin in Christ no longer sin. And Paul resists letting his readers (or us) off the hook by talking about sanctification; the ongoing process of becoming conformed to the likeness of Christ. He wants us to grapple with how incompatible sin is with a life following Jesus.

But his motivation is not to crush us under an unrealistic expectation where we end up feeling guilty or condemned. Rather, his desire is to remind his readers (and us) of the promise we live under. It's found in Romans 6:14 and might very well be the summary of the good news, "For sin shall no longer be your master."

This promise – given to those in Christ – is the starting point for our struggle with sin. It isn't a command, but an invitation to hopeful living. Whenever we have a promise made to us, we tend to live in the light of that promise; we live in hope that it will be fulfilled. The promise that sin shall no longer be our master is grounded in our experience "in Christ" with whom we have been baptised into death, been buried, and been raised to life – all of which are passive verbs; they are done to us! In Christ, God has made us dead to sin (rather than being dead because of sin – which is how Romans begins!).

It is only in light of what God has done for us and his promise that sin shall no longer be our master that we can look the commands to not let sin reign in our bodies, nor to offer ourselves to sin, but rather to God squarely in the eye without flinching. In our own strength these are impossible, but in Christ, all things are possible!

So let us live more hopefully, not allowing sin any space in our lives!

Questions to Ask

1. What stood out to you in this sermon?
2. Sanctification – the lifelong process of being conformed to the likeness of Christ – can, if we're not careful, a justification for allowing sin in our lives. How might we recognise a comfort level with ungodly behaviour in our lives?
3. What encouraged you most about the baptisms?
4. How can we live more hopefully in the light of the promise that sin shall no longer be our master?
5. If someone asked you why they should be baptised what would you tell them?

A Prayer to Pray

Continue to pray for each other that the Holy Spirit would identify an area of our lives that He wants to align more closely over the course of 2025.

A Practice to Try

Memorise some or all of Romans 6:1-14; making sure to include verse 14.

Readings to Read This Week

The following passages reflect the promise of Romans 6:14.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Ezekiel 11:17-21

Ephesians 1:15-2:10

Galatians 3:23-29

A Mission Commitment to Reflect on

Our theme – Lives Changed by Jesus – is also our vision as a community of faith and has two areas of focus. First, that we might see lives changed for the first time by placing their faith in Jesus. Second, that we might see change in our lives as we continue to follow Jesus. We hope to keep both of these in view over the course of the year.

There may be opportunity to identify those in our lives who are becoming more open to faith or who are exploring faith in Jesus who we might more prayerfully support and encourage this year.

A GBC Initiative to Promote/Celebrate

Each week we will provide you with a key aspect of our community news that we would encourage you to remind your Life Group about.

Our next baptism service will be held in late October this year. If there are people in your Life Group who have not been baptised, encourage them to think about doing so in October.

Additional Resources:

The mission commitments of GBC

We have made several references to the mission commitments of GBC. This is the title we have given to our vision, purpose, and values. These will no doubt be familiar to you, but we thought it might be helpful to provide a clear overview of them.

Our mission commitments begin with John 20:21, “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”

These words contain a central belief about what we are called to as a community of faith: that we are to continue the ministry and mission of Jesus to restore and renew everything according to the will of the Father and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we reflected on this commission, we formulated a mission statement to attempt to summarise what we wanted to do. While we don't refer to it very often, it is helpful to see the progression of our thought. **The mission we formulated was:**

Everywhere we go and in everything we do, we will invite everyone to follow Jesus.

Taking the pattern we find in the Gospels we affirm that anyone can begin to follow Jesus; regardless of what they believe about him, what they know about him, and without changing their lives. When Jesus called his first disciples, he demanded none of these things; only inviting them to follow him. Over time they learned about him which challenged their beliefs about him and raised the implications for their lives, but initially, they only needed to be willing to follow.

The individual transformation that comes as people place their trust in Jesus and the commission that he has sent us to participate in led to a simple **vision statement; what we want to see. *We want to see lives changed by Jesus.***

All of this took shape in our purpose as a community of faith – our “why”. ***To be a community of faith who courageously take up the invitation of God the Father to participate in His grand plan to restore and renew all things in Christ Jesus through the enabling presence of the Holy Spirit.***

It was only as we gained clarity on our purpose that we identified a set of values that we believed were aligned with these mission commitments. The five values we identified are:

- To be ***On-Purpose***. Intentional to create margins in our lives to participate in God's mission.
- To be ***Big-Hearted***. Generosity in all our resources as a reflection of God's own generosity to us is a central value.
- To be ***Whole-Life Learners***. As followers of Jesus we are called to ongoing transformation of our lives; learning to be more like Jesus. This also invites humility as we recognise our ongoing need of change.
- To be ***Others-Focused***. To demonstrate love and care to others, over and above ourselves is a key characteristic of followers of Jesus.
- To be ***Trust-Worthy***. We don't want to get in the way as people begin to follow Jesus. We want to reflect this value in our commitment to being a Safe Church.

These are the mission commitments that we hope will serve to give us some common language that reminds us of our unity together as followers of Jesus and the community of faith here at GBC.