

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT TO THINK?

Read Psalm 146:1-5

What princes or human beings might we be tempted to trust? Which ones do we listen to? (Scientists / Media / Parents / Experts / celebrities ???) Perhaps get group to share which voices they particularly listen to: TV programmes / Radio / Newspaper / Blogs etc)

Why does the psalmist warn us not to trust them? (They cannot save us / they are merely humans who will one day die – instead the psalmist wants us to trust the Lord)

Read Proverbs 3:5-6

In what ways are we tempted and encouraged to “lean on our own understanding”? (How we “feel” is the big influence in our culture “Be yourself”. Our opinion seemingly counts more than ever – we are all experts, able to comment on news reports / contribute to phone ins / pass on our message on social media etc)

What would it look like and involve to “trust in the Lord” instead? (Need to know what he says – so listen to his Word. And when Scripture says different to what we think or want – will we listen? Obey? Try to understand?) “In all your ways acknowledge him.”

Worth pausing here – as this is fundamental for how we approach this sermon series. It will take a degree of humility to listen to God’s word. Could go to Psalm 95 from recent sermon – “do not harden your hearts”

Read John 15:9-15

What does Jesus tell his disciples (including us) to do? Obey him

What are the surprises to our human logic in these verses? He calls us friends and tells us to obey! We don’t say that to our friends.

What can we know because of Jesus (v15)? What the Father has revealed to him – that’s a lot!

Read Mark 10:42-45

What kind of authority does Jesus exert? Servant natured. That’s important. Here’s a different kind of authority – but one we can trust. Has our best interests at heart – so obeying him is worth it.

Read 2 Tim 3:16-17

What does Paul tell us about the whole Bible?

All God breathed – all from God. All useful to us.

Read Matthew 12:18-21

What does the Bible tell us about how Jesus treats people? How ought that to shape how we might talk of others?

Care for bruised reeds

Implications:

- How should we approach hearing sermons which might touch on abortion, assisted suicide, gender and sexuality?

Our personal views will have been shaped by the culture – what “princes” say or what “I like to think”. We need to humbly try and listen to God in His word.

- How should we approach discussing these topics?

With real consideration for real people’s struggles

Reflection:

- Has God’s word been crowded out as an influence over my life? What do I need to do?
- Where am I struggling to obey God’s word?

Pray

For God’s help to listen and trust and obey his word.