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a quick-start guide to
the Christian faith

*7 simple steps to
get you going!*



**Gilcomston
Church**

www.gilcomston.org

1 what it's not!



Start by getting rid of any negative ideas
as to what the Christian faith is all about!

gospel

The word 'gospel' simply means "**good news**".

It's "news" because it tells of events which
have taken place: and it's "good" because
the way in which those events affect
our experience is amazingly well,
amazingly good and positive.

The gospel is
not like most of the news we hear.

And Christianity is
not really like other 'religions' at all.

It's **not** a code of ethics or a set of rules.

It's **not** some new philosophy or a way of looking at life.



2 what it is!

The gospel is good news.

It tells you about something which happened:
and it introduces you to the Person who made it all happen.

The gospel is (in a word)
a relationship

It's a message basically about a Person.

A person whom you can get to know:
someone with whom you can have a wonderful relationship.

And someone who'll make the whole world of difference to your life.



Jesus



3 check out the 3 'Rs!

Memo to self:
get some basic
information
about this man!



Jesus is for real!

Far from being the hero of some fairy-tale, he is in fact the most documented individual in ancient history.



We have the record of eye-witnesses, of what we would now call 'investigative journalists', and of Jewish and Roman historians.

The list includes the record of, among others, a man called Luke.

Luke was a doctor by profession. He'd researched his material thoroughly – and at every point where you can check up on the guy, he's found to be 100% on the button. Reliable.

Jesus is for real.

“ ”

Luke 1.1-4

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye-witnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.





Jesus is remarkable!

He left his mark on history!

Here's why –

- His life was unparalleled!
- His teaching was unique!
- His power was awesome!

- His claims were massive!

*Jesus didn't (& doesn't) fit any
of our usual categories!*

And, more remarkable still ..

- His death changed everything

BC
AD



Jesus is risen!

Check it out!

Read
1 Corinthians
15.1-8

When a person dies, that's it.

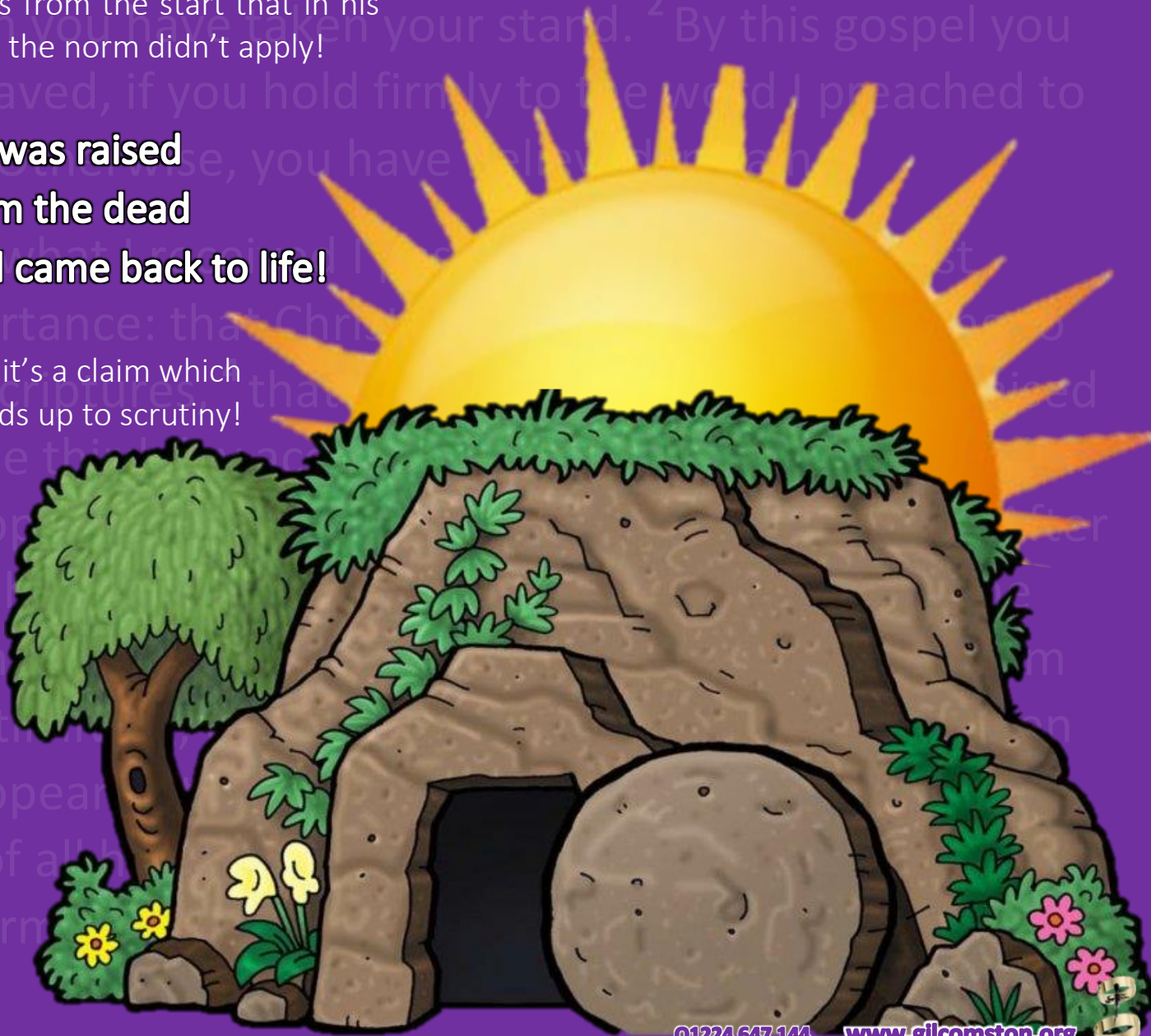
Usually.

Dead. And then buried.

But the claim was made about Jesus from the start that in his case the norm didn't apply!

**He was raised
from the dead
and came back to life!**

And it's a claim which stands up to scrutiny!



4 get the point!

If Jesus is for real, if he's really that remarkable, and if he is indeed risen and alive today – does it actually make much of a difference?

Answer. **Yes!**

Here's why and how!



“Jesus Christ and him crucified ..”

From the start the message centred on a person and an event.

The person – Jesus.

The event – his death and resurrection.

Not complicated. Just really significant.

Because his death and resurrection changed everything.

**“Behold,
I am making
all things
new.”**
Revelation 21:5



1. Jesus died in our place

Jesus lived the sort of life all of us *should* have lived (but haven't) – a life of perfect obedience.

Worth noting!

Take a close look at how Jesus changes everything!

forgiveness
a new relationship

He was the one person who didn't deserve to die.

But he did die.

A cruel, wretched death.

And his death, he insisted, was in our place. It was to pay the price for all our shortcomings and wrongdoings. He took the place of people who'd messed up.

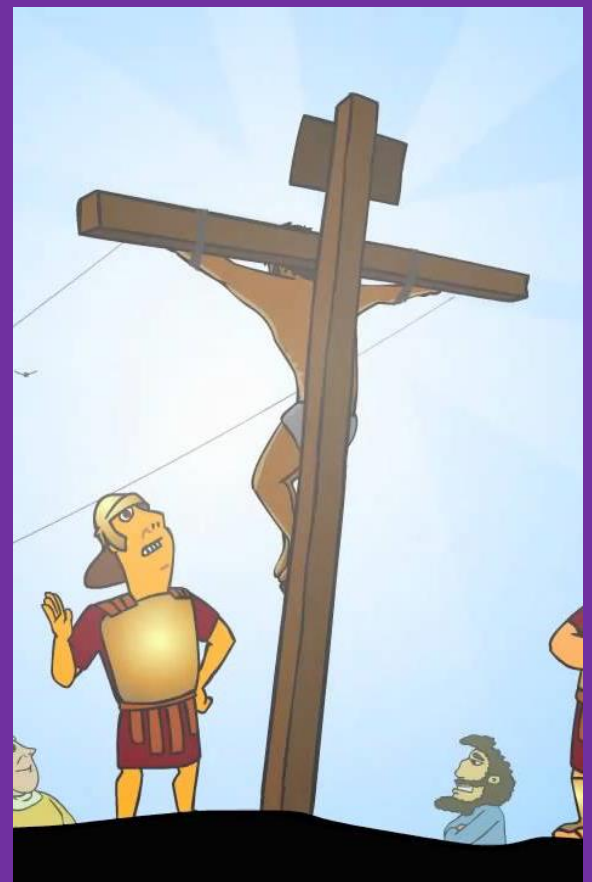
"Father
forgive them,
for they know
not what they
do..."

-- JESUS

Which is all of us!

The fact that he rose from the dead made it clear that the price had been paid in full. Nothing more is needed – it's all been done and it's all been paid!

That means we can enjoy a new relationship with God, with no fear that somewhere down the line there's going to be some 'payback'!



In fact, this is the **only** way we can get right with God and enjoy that sort of relationship with Him.

2. Jesus makes us new

Being forgiven is one thing.

A big thing, for sure!

But it's not the only thing we need. We need to be **changed** as well as forgiven.



DEAR GOD,
I HAVE A PROBLEM.
IT'S ME.

We. Need. To. Be. Changed.

And Jesus has an amazing track record of doing just that!

When he's around the blind see, the lame walk ... and the crooks get straightened out.



Because Jesus is risen and alive, he's someone whose presence we can know and on whose power we can draw.

He changes us as he comes to be part of our day-by-day lives.

He comes to live *with* us and *in* us and *through* us, by his Holy Spirit.

3. Jesus brings us hope



We don't have an answer to death.

Do we just shrug our shoulders, grit our teeth and accept it as ... well, as just an unfortunate 'fact of life'?

We react against the dreadful finality of death though.

Is this *really* how it's meant to be? A few short years, and then that's it? Finito.

resurrection
a new future

Jesus is living proof that death needn't be the final word in our lives.

By raising Jesus from the dead, God gave notice that what he's demonstrated in Jesus he will do for his people.

Jesus has made sure there's a great future ahead for his people!

We'll be raised from the dead, and made perfect in body, mind and spirit!

“ ”

1 Corinthians 15.16-20

If corpses can't be raised, then Christ wasn't, because he was indeed dead. And if Christ wasn't raised, then all you're doing is wandering about in the dark, as lost as ever. It's even worse for those who died hoping in Christ and resurrection, because they're already in their graves. If all we get out of Christ is a little inspiration for a few short years, we're a pretty sorry lot.

But the truth is that Christ *has* been raised up, the first in a long legacy of those who are going to leave the cemeteries.

[The Message]



5 trust in Jesus!

Faith always involves trust.

It's ultimately a *relational* thing more than just something *rational*.

It's not just believing certain truths, but *acting* on them and, on the basis of what you believe, entrusting yourself to another person. In this case, Jesus.

This remarkable person, Jesus, is risen and for real! He changes everything.

Faith involves you, first of all, believing that: then you turn **from** a pattern of self-centred living **to** a life lived under the care of, and in the service of, Jesus as Lord.

1 Thess.1.10-11

"... you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath"

**Sorry!
I messed up!**

Faith has a *future* as well as a *present* dimension. You serve the Lord now – and are looking forward to something even better!

faith



6

ask Jesus in!

Please,
Jesus,
come in to
my life..!

Jesus made a startling and wonderful promise! When you respond to him in faith, it's as if you open the door of your life to him... and he comes in!



Jesus comes in to your life by his Holy Spirit to live both *with* you and *in* you.

By his Spirit living in you, you're able both to experience *his love for you* – and to discover a deepening *love for him* growing in you.



As he comes to live in your life, he uses his resurrecting power *in* you to begin changing your life for good. And at the same time, by that same power, he also works *through* you mightily as well, making you fruitful in his service!

fire

“ ”

REVELATION 3.20

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me”



7 join the church!

As you entrust yourself to Jesus, he brings you into his family.



Everything which is true of him becomes true of you: you become a child of God! His people become your people, the church – a big 'forever' family!

Find a local fellowship which centres its life around Jesus, is keen to learn from the Bible, prays and worships together, and is finding all sorts of ways to share the good news about Jesus with others.

And **then join them!** They'll be a pretty mixed crowd, but –



- **commit to them:** they're your brothers and sisters, and you're bound to them!
- **stand by them:** they need your support and encouragement just as you'll need theirs!
- **serve them:** share in the work of God, using your gifts alongside others using theirs!
- **pray for them:** there's real joy in bringing their needs to God as well as your own!
- **praise with them:** join with others to sound out the greatness of God!
- **learn from them:** as you read and study the Word of God, others will help you!

all the earth bows down
to you; they sing praise to you



Jesus said simply, 'Follow me!'

Start the adventure now!

Down the years countless people have heard that call, taken that step of entrusting their lives to Jesus, and have trod this path before you.

Speak to him yourself and let him know that as of now *you're* following as well!
You could say something along these lines –

Jesus,
I know I don't measure up:
in fact, sometimes I've messed up badly. I'm sorry.

Thank you that you lived the sort of life I should have lived
(but haven't), and that you did that for all who trust in you.

Thank you, too, that you died that death, forsaken by God,
which by rights I should die (but now needn't).

I'm glad that you broke the power of death, that you're alive,
and that you're at work in the world today.

I need you to help me in everything. I've got a lot to learn ..
and a lot that needs to be changed!

But I want you to know, I'm yours. You're King, and I'm glad
to give myself to you and to serve you all my days.

Where you go, I go: where you stay, I stay:
your people will be my people.
I'm yours, Jesus, forever!

*"The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of
dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day"*

Proverbs 4.18

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