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## **Faith at work: *the case for mid-week lunch time talks*** **Matthew Evans (Spring 2012)**

### ***Jesus is Coming Back***

As a solicitor working in the City, each morning tends to start with a review of the financial news stories that have filled my in-box overnight. Needless to say, 2011 did not make for particularly uplifting reading. With each morning came more news of 'crisis', whether it was the debt crisis, a cri-sis of confidence or crisis in the Eurozone. It was hard to comprehend the sheer scale of the endless bad news and easy to be left wondering what the future held. With each day, total financial collapse seemed to draw ever nearer.

But amid all the speculative talk of financial catastrophe, there was no mention of the certain coming event that should be of greatest concern to us all. It's not the next meeting of European Finance Ministers or the next vote on Greek austerity measures. Rather, it's the day when the trumpet sounds and the Lord Jesus returns. This day doesn't make any of the headlines on my desktop or feature in any of my clients' queries. But this doesn't make it any less a reality either for me or for my col-leagues. The Bible tells us that Jesus is coming back and that his return will be more significant, will have a wider impact and will send bigger shockwaves around the world than any of the events that shook the global economy in 2011.

This is why many churches organise and support lunch time Bible teaching minis-tries. In towns and cities across the country during weekday lunch hours, mid-week Bi-ble talks are held to help people to prepare for the return of Jesus. This brief article seeks to make the case for involvement in, and commitment to, these valuable lunch time ministries.

### ***Prepare OURSELVES to meet Jesus***

The future return of Jesus is not just a truth to be grappled with when it is spoken of from the pulpit on a Sunday. It is just as much a reality when we reach our desks on Monday morning. Indeed, the Bible tells us that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:3). As Christians therefore, we must at all times be pre-paring for the return of our King and it is in light of Christ's future return that Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to be encouraging one another and building one another up (1 Thess. 5:11).

Mid-week lunch time Bible talks are a great opportunity for the body of Christ, the people of God to meet together to encourage one another in preparing for that coming day. Amidst the busy-ness and, often, spiritual darkness of the working week, these meetings are a brilliant way for Christians – who often work in teams or offices where there may be no other believers – to point one another back towards our heavenly inheritance and to spur one another on in living boldly for King Jesus in the work-place until that day comes.

When work is busy and deadlines are looming, it can be easy to forget that the King is coming back. We can easily lose sight of the hope to which we have been called and the challenge to be living distinctively for the Lord. To be able to meet with Christian family to hear a talk from God's Word during a lunch time can provide a great shot in the arm to keep going for Jesus, even when all around us seems to be saying otherwise.

### ***Help COLLEAGUES prepare to meet Jesus***

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According to recent figures, there are currently more than 150,000 solicitors and more than 15,000 barristers in England. Yet among these thousands of lawyers, it seems that only a small minority have taken the time to weigh up the evidence about Jesus.

As Christian lawyers, we are surrounded in our offices and chambers each day by men and women who have not received the free forgiveness that is offered through the blood of the Lord Jesus. We work alongside colleagues who are simply not prepared to stand before the King and who are therefore facing God's righteous judgment. And so mid-week talks do not exist solely to strengthen believers (although they are in that respect, as I hope I have shown, of great value) but also to make Jesus known to those who have not yet called upon his name. They are places where Christians can bring colleagues week-on-week to hear the good news about Jesus reasoned and explained.

Your church may have a notice board up somewhere which gives information about mission partners whom your church supports, maybe based in Asia, Africa, or Eastern Europe. There is unlikely, however, to be information on the board about the LPC student who is seeking to tell classmates in his law school about Jesus or the barrister who is praying for opportunities to proclaim Christ in her chambers. Yet these are as much mission fields as the deserts of Africa and our colleagues are as much in need of God's grace as the people of deepest China. So mid-week talks exist to help Christians to bring colleagues under the beautiful sound of the gospel and to prepare them to meet their King.

### ***What to expect***

It is my hope and prayer that through this article I have encouraged you to consider the value of partnering with brothers and sisters at a mid-week lunch time Bible talk. I thought it would be helpful, therefore, to conclude by providing a brief overview of the format of these meetings as well as some reflections on my own experiences of becoming involved.

The informal meetings generally follow a fairly similar format with the Bible read and taught for 25 minutes and with an opportunity for questions or discussion. The meetings take place in all manner of venues from church buildings to bars, coffee shops to art galleries and even, in one case, on a barge.

I attend The Moorgate Talks on Wednesday lunch times in the basement of a Cu-ban-themed bar at the northern end of the City. If I'm honest, it can often feel like there are more important things to be doing come 1pm than to head off to a basement to hear a talk from the Bible. And yet, when I am there, I am reminded of the glorious truths on which I pin my hope. I am pointed back to the Lord Jesus after a morning when so many other things have been battling for my attention. I am taught the living word of God which will keep me wise for salvation as I return to my desk after lunch. And even if I haven't been joined by a colleague for the talk, I have something to tell them about should the opportunity arise when I get back to the office.

As Paul reminds the Romans, 'salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.' Jesus is coming back. For those who are prepared, who have received Jesus as Lord and Saviour, we know that that day will be a wonderful day of glorious home-coming. But for those who have not received God's mercy, we know that it will be a fearful day of judgment.

So if you have a lunch time ministry near your office, why not make getting involved this year a real priority. If you don't have one nearby, why not see if you can locate some other Christians working in the area and start a prayer group to ask God to provide such a ministry. Many of the mid-week Bible talks that now take place

across London happen because a small group of believers first started meet-ing over coffee to ask God to provide such a ministry in their area.

If you work in London, visit [www.workingwithworkers.org.uk](http://www.workingwithworkers.org.uk) to find your nearest mid-week talk, or turn the page! Various other lunch time talks hap-pen around the country.

Matthew Evans

At the time of writing, Matthew was an Associate at city law firm, Simmons & Simmons.

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