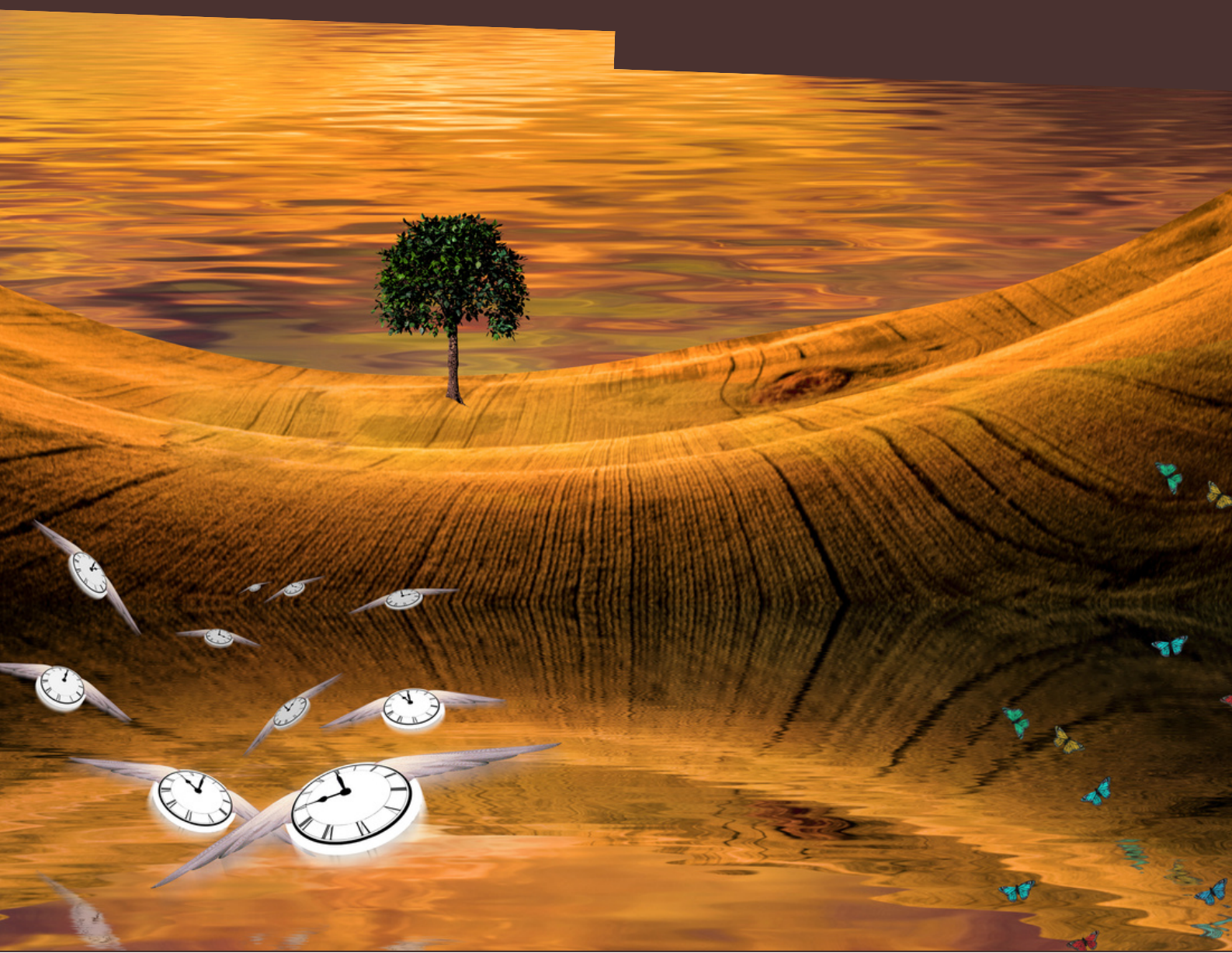

ENABLE 1.3

Ears to Hear - Small Group Session Three
Week Beginning 1st October



A word of warning

God has given us many gifts to help us live as disciples of Jesus while we wait for His return. Over the last two sessions, we have been thinking about God's great gift of the church - we have one another.

We first saw that we are called to be devoted "to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42)

Last week, we started to see what that looks like in practice. We were taken to John's vision in Revelation and given a picture of the heavenly throne room. Jesus stands in the midst of His church, He knows all her strengths and weaknesses - and Jesus, in His glory, speaks His message to His church.

First, we were encouraged not to be full of good deeds and hard work yet to have no love (Revelation 2:1-7). Secondly, we were encouraged that if we were faithful, but fearful, as Christians then Jesus says we should endure suffering because in the end the crown of life awaits us. (Revelation 2:8-11).

This week, we are looking at two more churches - two churches that face a very similar problem (we will finish this section next week by coming to the final three churches).

What Jesus says this week is shocking. I don't think we picture Jesus acting like this towards the church - bringing His discipline. Jesus' word challenges how we think about Jesus and how we think about the church. It might be that Jesus cares much more about our life together than we might think.

At the end of every one of these letters that Jesus writes, He says to each church, "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches". Before you start the session this week, spend time praying that we might have ears to hear Jesus' words in the power of the Spirit.

**Repent therefore!
Otherwise, I will soon come to you.**

Revelation 2:16

Ears To Hear

1 Outline the message

You might have noticed last week that the first two letters to the churches follow a similar pattern, it is in fact a pattern that is repeated in all seven letters. So now take a large piece of paper and divide it into five big sections with the following titles:

- **The words of...**
- **I know...**
- **But...**
- **A challenge or warning...**
- **The one who conquers...**

Now read through the letters to churches three and four completely (Revelation 2:12-29). Then work back through the passage a second time filling in the details on your piece of paper for each of the sections for both of the churches.

2 What does it teach us

There are a lot of similarities between these two churches so we will look at them together. Let's reflect on each of the sections in turn:

The words of...

What is the picture we are given on Jesus here? How does it impact how we listen to His letter to the church?

I know...

There is much that is commendable in the life of both these churches. How does their life together both encourage and challenge us?

But...

The striking thing about both these churches is that, despite so much that is good, they have both been taken in by false teaching and immorality. Why might that surprise us? How might that challenge us?

A challenge or warning...

How should we respond in the face of false teaching and immorality? How does Jesus respond? Why might Jesus' response be surprising to us? How does it make us feel?

The one who conquers...

For those who repent and remain faithful a wonderful blessing is in store in the new creation. We will be taken to the new creation where we will judge and rule with Jesus. How is this different from our usual picture of the new creation? How is it encouraging?

3 Prayer

It would be odd if, once again, we didn't find Jesus' words both deeply encouraging and deeply challenging. What is the one main thing you are going to take away from the session?

Now, given everything we have seen, turn to pray for your group and our church, .



Autumn Term Timetable

Introducing ENABLE - Central Meeting

7:30pm Thursday 7th September

Small Group Session 1.1

Week beginning 10th September

Prayer Meeting Week

7:00pm Trinity-wide hosted at All Hallows - 20th September

Small Group Session 1.2

Week beginning 24th September

Small Group Session 1.3

Week beginning 1st October

Small Group Session 1.4

Week beginning 8th October

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 18th/19th October

Half Term Break - Week beginning 22nd October

Small Group Session 2.1

Week beginning 29th October

Small Group Session 2.2

Week beginning 5th November

Prayer Meeting Week

7:30pm 15th/16th November

Small Group Session 2.3

Week beginning 19th November

Small Group Session 2.4

Week beginning 26th November

ENABLE into Action - Group Activities

Week beginning 3rd December

support and
encouragement
to live for Jesus