

Short Talk

(SHT211)

**“Are we willing to be
challenged?”**

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SHORT TALK: “Are we willing to be challenged?”

- Aim of Short talk:** To challenge people about their attitude towards Jesus when He challenges their lifestyles with His truth.
- Use of Short talk:** This is a short All Age talk picking out one issue from the Lectionary Gospel reading of the Sunday main service. The talk stands alone and assumes that the Gospel Bible reading may not yet have been read to the congregation. It could be used for example, for the whole congregation before the children go out to their age specific groups, leaving the adults with a full sermon later.
- Main themes:** Truth, Challenge, Criticism
- Biblical references:** Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
- Lectionary:** Year A – The 4th Sunday after Trinity
- Props:** A “single use” plastic bag.
You also need to be able to project the picture in Appendix 1.

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Sometimes people tell us truths that we don't really want to hear.

- It can be especially difficult to hear a truth that challenges the way that we live, and points towards us having to make some changes.

So, for example, over the last few years environmental experts have been telling us that plastic is building up in our oceans. *(Project picture from Appendix 1)*

- They say that we need to stop using as much plastic as we have been doing because the plastic is causing a lot of damage to fish and animals.
- Instead of using plastic bags like this one *(Hold up single use plastic bag)* we are being told that we need to use other bags that don't get thrown away immediately.

I wonder how you have responded to this truth.

- Do you believe what the scientists are saying?
- If you do believe, then you will make a change to the shopping bags that you use when you go to the supermarket.
- No longer will you use simple plastic bags to hold your shopping, but you will go out and buy a stronger bag that you can use each time you shop.

Some people however, even though they have seen the pictures of the seas full of plastic, will carry on using the plastic bags that they have always used *(Hold up single use plastic bag)* because it is easier to do so.

They will also often criticize the scientists who have been telling the truth, saying things like:

- *“there isn’t enough proof”* or
- *“it’s all a bit extreme”* or even
- *“there are other opinions about this”*

You see, when we don’t like the truth that someone gives us about something, we can often react badly.

- We might be critical about the person or grumble about what they have said....
- and often it’s because basically, we don’t want to make a change to our lives;
- changes that cost us in some way.

When Jesus was teaching people the truths about God’s Kingdom, people reacted to Him in different ways.

- Some people listened to Him and followed Him; doing what He said,
- however, a lot of people criticised Jesus and grumbled about what He said, because they didn’t want to change the way that they lived.

Instead of responding to the truth that Jesus was teaching they attacked Him personally saying that He was *“a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.”*
(Matthew 11:19)

People react in the same ways to Jesus today.

Some will listen and do what Jesus says and change their lives, while others can find what Jesus says so challenging that they try and write Jesus off, saying things like:

- *“there isn’t enough proof”* or
- *“it’s all a bit extreme”* or even
- *“there are other opinions about this”*

So, how will you react to the truths that Jesus speaks to you this week?

- When He challenges something that you are doing in your life, will you listen and change what you are doing,
- or will you grumble and be critical?

As followers of Jesus, let us react to His challenges by doing what He says.

Appendix 1 – Picture

