

What in the WORLD?!

Hi guys!

Welcome to the companion for this new series on the podcast!

This series is going to be a little different to the others as they won't necessarily be week-in week-out, or even particularly structured – I'm just going to be engaging with the news and putting a Christian worldview onto it!

This week, I went to the BBC news website and just... looked at the stories there. No planning, no prep, just used my knowledge and understanding of the worldview we all hold to interpret the news in the light of Christ.

As a result, this companion will be pretty short in comparison to usual. I'm going to put the link to the article, so you can read it for yourself, and then put some notes on what I said in the podcast.

Let's get into it!

So, in this episode we looked at [this article](#), which focused on A Level and GCSE results because, apparently, lots of people were disappointed with their results.

In this article, we have a young lady who has said getting lower grades has ruined her life.

To get some context, let's also read [this story](#) about the algorithms.

So, has this ruined her life?

- Firstly, I would argue that she and others like her (nothing against her personally) have got the wrong standard of success. If you take the cultural standards of success (money, power, fame, influence, nice possessions, etc) then sure, not getting the grades you want or the uni you want is a massive blow. Isn't this a stupid amount of pressure to put on young people between the ages of 14-18 though?! Do we really believe that this is an appropriate age to put people in a position where their life can be massively altered?

Luckily, true success is measured not by your possessions and power (and so on), but rather by how closely you are walking with Jesus. Have you given your life to Christ? Have you repented of your sin? Do you have a changed heart? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you discipling yourself? These are the true measures of success.

- Secondly, I believe she is wrongly creating and pursuing her own plans for her life. What I mean by this is that we can make our plans, but they aren't necessarily going to happen. We don't have omniscience, we can't see the future, but we assume the plans we make are going to happen. When they don't, due to unforeseen circumstances, we end up grieving! In the bible we read that hope deferred makes the heart sick, so when we lose our hope, our plans are defeated, and we grieve for what could have been... as if it ever existed! God is the only person who knows the end from the beginning, so we should rest in *His* plans.
- I believe we also have a habit in this culture of assuming these things have more meaning than they do. Let's be honest – do A level results *really* matter? Do your GCSE results *really* matter? Of course they're important, but do they change the meaning of your life? Do they change your value as a human? Absolutely not. Don't

ascribe that much meaning to these things so they get you to this point, declaring your life is ruined, purely because you don't get what you thought you would.

- Ultimately, we and she are not relying on the promises of God

The good thing is, as Christians, we can have a different perspective on all of this:

- As I said before, our standard of success should be God's standard! When the disciples are arguing about who will be the greatest, in Luke 22:24-30, Jesus completely inverts their assumptions about greatness (or success). We are not the same as the world, the first among us will be the last, the greatest are those who serve.
- We're not alone in our plans and in our steps, God determines the plans for our lives and we step out after them in faith and boldness (Proverbs 16:9 says *"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps"*).
- The ultimate meaning of reality is to know God and be in right-standing with Him through the works and blood of Jesus Christ
- God has made promises for our benefit and blessing multiple times:
 - Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"*
 - Ephesians 2:10 *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them"*
 - Romans 8:28 *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"*

So, overall, we need to rid ourselves of this human and worldly standard of 'success' and replace it with God's.

If we do that, we'll be able to rid ourselves of the grief of failed expectations, of failing at something, of falling short of the mark... God does not see us as a conglomeration of our achievements or failings, but as washed in the blood of Christ.

Also in [this article](#) there are some pictures of young people protesting their results. In these pictures we see signs that say things like 'there's no justice' or 'this is classism'.

Is this true?

First off, this is unjust, yes. The government has apparently banded groups of people together based off their school's previous achievement in exams and how they have been ranked in terms of ability. This is taking groups of people as a whole, not accounting for individuals, and ascribing them a score. That's terrible! That's like identity politics and intersectionality, which are both evil things, that say 'you are like this because you fit this profile'. Awful.

Is that classism though? I don't think so. My understanding, which could easily be wrong, is that school pupil-bases are based on catchment areas, not the class of the people within those areas. If you had a large catchment area you might have 4 or 5 different areas with a spread from working class through middle class all the way through to the toffs, who knows! But those who live in the area might also have a few schools from which to pick. If one school ends up mostly full of middle-class kids or whatever, that's just the demographic that has chosen that school, not vice versa.

Here's the problem with all of this – we have a culture in which we're told to try and be victims. According to the world, there's always someone else responsible for your disadvantage or lack of privilege: you didn't do well at school? Classism. Your area is

struggling with flooding? Global warming. You earn less than your male colleague? The patriarchy. You live in a crime-ridden neighbourhood? Racism. All of it also fits under 'oppression'.

All of those things might well be unfair or unjust, or they equally might be due to your own personal choices and decisions, but don't just assume there's a label we can slap on it and avoid responsibility for it.

Let's not do what the world does and seek to find an injustice, then slap a hateful slur or buzz word on it, to justify our own immoral reactions, such as slander or rioting.

It's like the whole 'it's okay to punch a Nazi' thing all over again, which, if you're not familiar, was the movement of memes after a political figure was punched for 'being a Nazi'. This then turned into people deciding anyone they disagreed with was a Nazi, so therefore could be punched. A hideous state of affairs!

God's justice is perfect, we can rely on that.

In a quick summary of the other news:

In [this article](#) we read that Donald Trump's younger brother has died, aged 71. What's saddest about this is that people will use this bereavement to still have a go at the president, because people don't like him. We need to be above this sort of thing, guys – pray for our leaders because without God they're going to lead us to hell.

Finally, in [this article](#) we read that Birmingham can't drop guard as coronavirus infections double. Crumbs. Keep praying for this to end, guys, but don't be lured into living in fear! This whole pandemic has really revealed a lot of people's fear in their hearts – a fear of death. We don't need to feel this way! In his letter to the Philippians (1:21), Paul says to live is Christ and to die is gain. This life is as close to hell as we will ever get, and while we're here our duty is to share the life and works of Jesus Christ! To die... well, that's just a winner because we get to enter into eternal paradise in the glory and presence of God!

To die is gain, to live is Christ.

We also read in 2 Timothy 1:7 that God has not given us a spirit of fear! So don't live in fear, believe in God's promises and have the peace that brings.

Obey the government, as horrible as that may be, because we're called to be good citizens as representatives of Christ.

That's all for this first episode of 'what in the world?'

As always, don't be afraid to get into the youth whatsapp chat and let us know how you are, what you're up to and what you're thinking. Get your prayer requests ready for Thursday and get involved in our Bible study! And you can grab us on Instagram @chawnyouth.

Speak to you next week!