

Group Notes 20th February 2011

Isaiah #3 - Obedience

Welcome – Ice Breaker

How obedient were you as a child – share (if appropriate!!!) your biggest act of disobedience while you were under 10 years old

Word – Sermon Summary Isaiah 50:4-11

Looking at Servant Songs in Isaiah, theme obedience

First verse to draw your attention to is v4 (**read out loud**). The Servant was obedient in his speaking. His words sustained and upheld the hearer. The words used in obedience were encouraging 'sustains the weary' and importantly given to the Servant by the Lord.

Words are very powerful there is a saying the 'pen is mightier than the sword'. Sometime there are words we feel have to be said and we know and sense in our hearts that they won't be well received. Those conversations you know you have to have with someone, maybe you're responsible for someone at work, and they're just not performing to scratch, or there's that talk you need to have with a partner, husband, wife and you know they are not going to like what you have to say.

The Servant, the prophet is referring to Christ – God had a message for Christ to share with the world.. and Christ's message wasn't/isn't always received well. Some of the things Christ had to say are unpleasant to hear.

- Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me
- Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it
- Blessed are the meek

But unpleasant/uncomfortable as these words are Christ always spoke words of encouragement

- Come to me all who are heavy and burdened and I will give you rest

Continue looking at verse 5, the servant here is obedient in his listening (**read 5 out loud**). How many of you have had to say at one point or another to someone, are you listening to me!! Have you heard what I've just said?. Sometimes listening isn't enough, it needs to be followed up...

Listening is a skill that is sometimes underestimated. The prophet in the reading was obedient in his listening, and was not rebellious, Jesus himself listened and lives were changed.

In verse 6 we read that obedience comes with some suffering (**read**), this was written about 750 years before Christ suffered these things himself. There are times aren't there in our lives when we know we have to do something that will hurt us, physically and emotionally. We would rather do anything than this particular thing that we know is going to hurt us, but we know in the long run it will be for the best. In the garden Christ says to God, not my will but yours, he knows what will happen to him, and really would rather it didn't, but he knows to be fully obedient he must go through with the plan.

In verse 7 (**read**) can you picture this OT prophet setting his face like flint. So determined to do what he has to do nothing is going to deter him from his purpose. I think this is the image the prophet is trying to instill, set my face like flint. Life is hard, life is not always easy, and we could choose to lie down and let it wash over us, or we could choose to put on our faces like flint, and say 'yeah come on life' Christ was obedient in his purpose to, he never faltered from the purpose laid before him.

Word 2 – Discussion Questions

- As Christ was obedient in his speaking, are we doing the same? How obedient are we in our quest to speak out the gospel at every opportunity, are we encouraging or critical? Do we encourage new members of our church, or long standing members as well, or do we discourage and criticize?
- As we spend time at our personal prayer, bringing everything before God, how often do we spend time listening to God, waiting on the Lord to respond, are our ears awakened? Do we really listen to our family members in church or do our eyes glaze over when we're in conversation with someone, our minds wandering, anything but really listening?
- Sharing our faith is sometimes painful, people do not want to hear it. We can get rebuffed, rejected or worse, Christ himself suffered all this – how do we suffer while sharing the gospel?
- Our purpose is to spread the gospel. Do we do that or are we more concerned with our personal preferences and likes and these things get in the way of spreading the word?

Worship Ideas

Break into small groups 2/3 pray for each other in the areas of the talk, speaking, listening, suffering and purpose.

Come back to the whole group and spend some time listening to some quiet music. Conclude with the Grace.

Works/Witness

Challenge; As a housegroup perhaps can you identify areas in St Matthew's church where the church family are obedient to God, areas where St Matthew's church is not obedient to God. Come back together as a housegroup and share your thoughts.