

Sunday 10th June 2012 **Reading Family Church**

Sermon Sunday – Evening Meeting

1) Edd Rundell: Seeking the Kingdom - Luke 12:22-31

Here we have a promise from God that he cares for us and he has everything under control, but Jesus never actually promises our physical needs would be met in the sense that we would understand. Life is not always going to be easy.

However, we are promised something much better here: that all our worldly needs will be met. We just need to understand what our needs actually are. The verse at the end of this passage is the important bit, "Seek his Kingdom".

Seeking his kingdom, Jesus teaches, is about giving material possessions and giving to the poor. And it says in v34 "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". If we are storing up treasures in heaven we have our focus on eternity, and when we have eternity in mind the things of this world are put into perspective. When we grasp the kingdom of God, suddenly all our worries of this world seem so irrelevant! Why does it matter?

Therefore we have no need to worry about anything; we can trust that God has it all under control. If he cares about the birds and lilies, how much more does he care for us? We can trust him because he is sovereign, omnipotent, loves us and wants what's best for us.

All we're told to do is seek his kingdom.

Questions:

- 1) Do you find yourself worrying about things often?
- 2) What do you understand about the phrase "seek his kingdom"?
- 3) What do you find hard about seeking his kingdom?
- 4) What can we do better to address this?

2) Glodine Munemo: Faith

1. What is faith? - Hebrews 11v1 states that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'. It is not based on evidence but on the ability to take God at his word. Hebrews 11v6 notes that 'without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.'

2. How to grow your faith? - The bible says in Romans 10v17 that 'faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' To grow in faith we each need to spend time with God and regularly read the bible. Barriers to faith include: doubt, the need for evidence, lack of growth or spiritual maturity, loss and disappointment. In the bible we have an example of Job who, in spite of painful life experiences, still maintained his faith.

3. Why is your faith tested? - Hebrews 11v17 shows that God tested Abraham to see whether he trusted him with his son. Abraham shows us that when our faith is tested; we should trust God! Verse 18 also shows that faith requires that we obey God even when he hasn't given us the full picture of what's required of us. Read Peter 1v6 -7; it shows us how we need to react when our faith is tested.

4. Who are the men and women of faith in the bible? - Examples are included in verses 7 (Noah), 11 (Sarah), and 30 - 40. I pray that we would be a people who continue to grow in our faith. I pray that God

will open our spiritual eyes that we would realize that without faith we cannot please him. I also pray that he will give us courage to stand up when life has knocked us down.

Questions:

1. How would you define/explain faith to a non-Christian?
2. In which area of your life is God calling you to grow your faith?
3. Which scripture on faith that speaks to your personal situation will you meditate on in the coming week?

3) William Offei: Live out your declaration? - Matthew 16: 13-17

In Matthew 16:16 we see Peter make a bold declaration about Christ, saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God", in response to a direct question that Jesus had asked the disciples about who they believed He was. In other words, Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah who has come from God. It is a declaration every true believer will have to make at some point in their life, but also live out.

A great example of how we can declare our faith:

Peter's response provides a great example of how we can publicly declare our faith in Jesus. Four key things stand out from the passage:

- Peter's answer was personal and specific - he said, "**You are** the Christ, the **Son of the Living God**". There was no ambiguity about his declaration.
- Peter's answer was a revelation from God - it was not an opinion or speculation.
- Peter declared Jesus the Messiah and God - he did not say Jesus was a prophet, though he knew that was what many followers of Christ believed Him to be.
- Peter was not afraid to publicly declare Jesus as Saviour and God - whilst making such a declaration was tantamount to blasphemy in the eyes of Jewish religious authorities at the time, Peter didn't measure his words or consult the other disciples before speaking. He spoke, both on his and their behalf, with authority

Not enough for us to declare our faith; we need to live it out!

Many of us have already declared Jesus as our Saviour and God, but James 2:17 tells us to back our faith with action. So it is not enough to just pray and sing about our faith. We need to live it out in our daily lives. We need to stand up for Jesus whatever the circumstance.

My boss is always bemused about why I believe in Jesus - someone I don't see - and why I spend so much of my weekend at church. Yet I have passed up one opportunity after another to declare to him who Jesus is. While this is my personal challenge to live out the faith I shout about every Sunday, yours may be different.

For you, it could well be:

- saving 20p a week to sponsor a child in need, or
- evangelising on the street once in a month, or
- making it a point to add one tin of baked beans to the ReadFood box every week, or
- praying for 1 minute each week for the millions of missionaries and aid workers around the world.

Whatever your personal challenge, let us live out the Christ we declare!

Questions:

1. Jesus would still be God even if we believed nothing about Him. How does it matter what we believe about Him?
2. Have you had any opportunity recently to tell someone about Christ? How did you approach it?
3. What is your personal challenge? What one thing would you resolve to do in living out your faith?