

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

## **Carrying the Presence of God: making Jesus visible...**

### **Introduction**

- ◆ Over the last year, we were hearing about God's presence coming and making a difference, from various sources:
  - Ground Level Leaders conference (Donkey talk)
  - Ron
  - Grapevine Encounter brochure
- ◆ We want to unpack a little of what it means to 'Carry the presence of God'.
- ◆ When we carry the presence of God we make Jesus visible (compare with can't see the wind, but we see its effects).
- ◆ As we carry the presence of God, we are building an altar of worship (See Sharon Stone prophecy for Harlow)
- ◆ We are going to explore two areas: signs and wonders and what we can do to carry the presence of God.

### **...through Signs and Wonders**

- ◆ Jesus brought glory to God through all He did, but people saw God's power through the miracles He did.
- ◆ Luke 7 v 11 – 16 (Jesus raises a Widow's Son)
  - The presence of God can be fearful to some when God's power is displayed (v16)
  - They recognised that God had visited them in power that day.
- ◆ Luke 8 v 26 – 39 (Jesus heals a demon possessed man)
  - The demons were scared at what Jesus was going to do.
  - Consequences of God's presence – the pigs all drowning – loss of income for the pig farmers.
  - Again fear swept over the people who had witnessed what had happened.
  - I hope we wouldn't want Jesus to leave our town because of our fears.
  - The man who had been delivered went through his entire town proclaiming what Jesus had done.
- ◆ Luke 18 v 35 – 42 (Jesus heals a blind beggar)
  - The blind man persisted in pursuing Jesus – do we?
  - Do we have faith that God is going to move in a powerful way?
- ◆ After all the miracles of Jesus, the people who saw what happened praise God extravagantly.
- ◆ How do you think we would respond if we witnessed or experienced those signs and wonders in Harlow?
- ◆ People within the fellowship have received words re: moving in signs and wonders – what are you doing with that word? Are you taking opportunities to pray for people / situations, or waiting for it to 'just happen'?

## ...through what we do

1 Kings 19:9b-13

[Elijah has run away because Jezebel has threatened to kill him; he has just arrived at Mount Sinai and is spending the night in a cave.]

- ◆ This scripture has been on my mind since the beginning of the year.
- ◆ What strikes me is the repeated question: 'What are you doing here?'
- ◆ **What are we doing here?!!**
- ◆ Why are we in the place(s) that we are?
- ◆ What are we doing in those places?

## Where are we?

- ◆ Harlow: **How did you end up in Harlow?** Born here? Moved here? However you ended up here, do you feel God has **called you** to serve in Harlow? (Share story of how I came to Harlow – although God had led me here through a series of circumstances, I didn't feel called to Harlow until some years later during a TFTK meeting with Martin Scott).
- ◆ Workplace / School / Home: **Do you feel called to your job / schooling / home situation? What role does God have for you there? What influence do you have in your workplace / school / home?**
- ◆ If you're not employed, you may feel this doesn't relate to you – but God knows all of our situations – what are we doing with the time God has given us? God calls us to be good parents, children and friends as well as work colleagues!
  - David choosing not to swear with his colleagues – makes him stand out as different – makes Jesus visible.
  - Bill at the hospital – not just sharing God's word / praying with people, but helping to feed patients – showing Jesus' love and compassion through words *and* action.
- ◆ Family: Whatever position we're in – single, married, with / without children, living alone, living with others – **what are you doing to make the most of it?** Do we make time to listen to and pray with those close to us? To spend time with them? Or are we too busy 'doing'?
- ◆ Church: How is God calling you to make Jesus visible at Freshwaters? Jonathan has spoken about signs and wonders, but **is God calling you to do something specific at Freshwaters?** There are lots of ways to serve and make Jesus visible to each other and those outside the church – it doesn't have to be an 'upfront' role:
  - Set up / Clear up
  - Tea / Coffee
  - Children's / Young people's work
  - Hospitality
  - Worship Team
  - Alpha
  - Outreach (see Luke's sign-up sheet)

- ◆ We are all called for a specific purpose, to serve in a particular way – **what are you called to do?** Where are your strengths / abilities?
- ◆ Ref: Brian / Terry – The parable of the talents: **What's in your bag?!!**
  - Hospitality?  
Family People Vision: *For people to gather together socially more often as a natural part of Church life.*
  - Listening to others?
  - Administration skills?
  - PC skills?
  - DIY?
  - Gardening?
  - Babysitting?
  - Being creative?
  - The list is endless...
- ◆ **How can you use these gifts to make Jesus visible in your home / workplace / locality?**
- ◆ We don't have to be involved in big overseas missions / work for the church full-time to make Jesus visible – we can make Him visible in the ordinary, everyday situations that we find ourselves in.
- ◆ Story of Dad being amazed about how people helped to serve at our wedding – spoke to him more than the church service did.
- ◆ BUT there are specific opportunities to make Jesus visible in our locality:
  - Contact Centre
  - Food Bank
  - Kidz Klub
  - Revelation
  - Social gatherings
- ◆ Do you realise / recognise that you have been called to this place at this time, or do you think you've just ended up here by accident / default?
- ◆ Take a RISK – identify what you are good at and DARE TO ask God to show you ways to use these skills to make Jesus visible.
- ◆ REMEMBER: the church is compared with a body made of many parts (I Corinthians 12: 12→) – all different – all with their own function. Don't try to be someone else – we need you to be you to make us the fellowship that God intends us to be.
- ◆ Read through the goals for the four Vision groups for this year – what makes you tick / excited? Talk to the leaders of the groups to find out how you can be involved.
- ◆ *Psalm 40:8*  
*I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart.*  
**What's God written on your heart? Take joy in doing His will.**