

St. Paul's Dorking Sermon Notes - Sept 11th 2011

Vision On – Loving God. 3 times the love! Ephesians 3:14 - 20

Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon:

Vision On was a groundbreaking children's television programme, shown on BBC1 from 1964 to 1976. Highly visual and creative it was originally aimed at children with hearing impairments but it soon became a favourite TV programme for everyone. The aim of **Vision On** was to encourage imagination, with a fast-paced flow of creativity and ideas. The title **Vision On** referred to the illuminated sign in studios indicating that cameras were live and ready for action! As we greet the Autumn here at St Paul's our **Vision is on!**

Vision On This term we will have the wonderful challenge of beginning a building programme which will see the facilities of our church become fit for purpose both for this generation and the next! There will be opportunities for each of us to be involved in this expression of our Vision for church and community.

Vision On This term we will have the opportunity of 'Exploring the Bible!' Sunday evenings we begin a major week by week exploration of the books of the Bible beginning with Genesis on Sept 18th. Every Sunday evening at 'Bible Explorer' we will explore the question 'what does this book mean for us today?'

Vision On This term we will have the fresh opportunity to engage with the three loves vision God has called us to express here at St Paul's. In particular this autumn we will be exploring what it means for us to love God and worship together.

Our vision here at St Paul's is to be a community characterised by three loves: Love of God - a life of Worship, Love for one another - a commitment to Christian Community, and Love for the World - a passion for mission. Our new teaching series **Vision On** gives us the opportunity to turn afresh to God's word to give us insight into our life together. This Autumn we focus particularly on *Loving God*, in the New Year we will engage with *Loving One Another* and in the Summer *Loving All in God's World*.

Earlier in the year our Radical Discipleship course was an exciting time for us as we grappled with some of the basics of discipleship and challenged ourselves as to the meaning of our discipleship today. Quite rightly the key challenges were related to our individual response to Christ's calling upon our lives. Our summer series on the twelve disciples also emphasised for us the individual personalities of the twelve disciples and their particular and peculiar ways of responding to Jesus' call upon their lives. However, Jesus never called disciples to a lone discipleship - he called his disciples to be together, as twelve, as seventy two, as a large church of several thousand in Jerusalem and eventually as many church communities across the Roman Empire and across the world. The key is 'together,' and the challenge that we face this term is what does it mean for us to be disciples together; to be called and committed to this particular Christian community here at St Paul's; to be responsible and accountable to one another; to help shape and form the expression of our common life together.

Our passage from Paul in his letter to the Ephesians brings us succinctly to the foundation stone of our calling to be Church - to Loving God. Here in a heartfelt prayer Paul prays that the Church would love. There are three petitions in particular:

Firstly that we would be strengthened though the power of the Holy Spirit –v16 so that Christ may dwell in our hearts

Think for a moment on the intimacy of Christ living in our hearts. Paul is calling here for a community of people who have the faith to believe that God's love can live in us.

Secondly – that we would be rooted and established in love – v17 so that we may have power to grasp how wide, deep, long and high is Christ's love for us. Think for a moment on what it means to sink our roots deep into the love Jesus has for us.

Thirdly - that we would know this love that surpasses knowledge – v19 so that we may be filled with the precious love of God in all its fullness. Think for a moment about letting God fill us and go on filling us with his love that we might fall in love with him again and again.

This powerful prayer of Paul's is literally a heartbeat of love for the Church, a call for the Church to love God in the sure knowledge of his love for us. Here at St Paul's God has called us to love him together in Dorking by being part of our particular church. Here each of us has the opportunity to commit ourselves afresh to being disciples together and as a community of faith anchored firmly in our love for him to express that love in a way that is unique to us.



Witness: questions to discuss Before discussion, read the Bible passages and ask God to help you discern what the Spirit wants to say to your group. Make sure there's plenty of room for prayer, worship and ministry.

1. Ice breaker: What was your favourite TV programme from your childhood and why?
2. How do you show that you love God? How does your small group show that you love God? How does our Church show that we love God?
3. **Being strengthened though the power of the Holy Spirit** –v16 so that Christ may dwell in our hearts
Think for a moment on the intimacy of Christ living in our hearts. Paul is calling here for a community of people who have the faith to believe that God's love can live in us. Do you believe God's love lives in you/us? What is the evidence?
4. **Being rooted and established in love** – v17 so that we may have power to grasp how wide, deep, long and high is Christ's love for us. How can we sink our roots deeper into the love Jesus has for us?
5. **Thirdly - that we would know this love that surpasses knowledge** – v19 so that we may be filled with the precious love of God in all its fullness. Think for a moment about letting God fill us and go on filling us with his love that we might fall in love with him again and again. Tell of any experiences you have had of being filled with God's love.
6. Here at St Paul's God has called us to love him together in Dorking by being part of our particular church. Here each of us has the opportunity to commit ourselves afresh to being disciples together and as a community of faith anchored firmly in our love for him to express that love in a way that is unique to us. What is unique about our call here at St Paul's to love God?