

# St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 12<sup>th</sup> October 2008

## Joshua – new vision new land

### On the border - Joshua 1:1-18



#### Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

You may be aware that this Autumn Term has been set aside for us to revisit our vision and values as a Church, to look ahead to new horizons and new challenges, and to seek God's guidance and leading. There will be various opportunities for us as a Church Family to do this including the evening set aside for prayer on Oct 20<sup>th</sup> for all in the Church, and also through our new preaching and teaching series on the book of Joshua, 'New Land, New Vision' which begins this week.'

Like Joshua we are in a very real sense standing on the banks of the Jordan wondering what lies ahead, what it is that God is calling us together for and how can we do it! This first Chapter in the book of Joshua has Joshua being given specific command to step out in faith and enter the land that lay across the Jordan, the land promised to God's people by God himself. God spends much of this chapter encouraging Joshua to move on out!

For us here at St Paul's there are four encouragements for us to prayerfully consider:

**Get Ready:** read verse 2. Last weekend our PCC spent the day away together to prayerfully consider our church's Vision and Values (see our termly booklets for a copy) and the Staff and Leadership met last Monday to continue to pray and share with one another. From that time three 'pictures' emerged that relate to what God is saying to us at this time. Firstly a boat in a place of calm with the sails down- right for now but the wind is coming when the sails will need to be up to be filled! Secondly a cot with all the favourite toys thrown over the sides leaving it clear. Thirdly a river flowing but impeded by a dam of twigs and branches. These pictures seem to confirm that at this time it is indeed right to seek God's guidance and direction, to not rush off in different directions but to give some clear space for him to work in us and for us to deal with those things that might be in the way of fulfilling his plans and purposes. Like Joshua we have yet to cross the Jordan and enter the new land that lies ahead and before doing so we need to get ready, be prayerful and deal with the obstacles.

**Have Vision:** read verse 2 again! Physically the Jordan would not have been difficult to cross but psychologically, spiritually, it was an ocean. God's people had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years! Do we as God's people today have the vision to cross boundaries and barriers to make God's love known and to extend his kingdom in ways we have not done before? Are we prepared to leave the familiar behind? God calls his people into unfamiliar territory which is occupied but is nevertheless going to be occupied if we have vision. One of the twigs blocking the river identified at the PCC away day relates to our Vision Statement which speaks of having passion, commitment and conviction in our love for God, for others, and for the world. The question was how passionate, committed and convicted are we? Without passion, conviction and commitment our Vision Statement is more of a statement than a vision! Are we too complacent?

**Trust God** – read verse 3 – Do we trust God enough to get our feet wet! The time is now for us to get ready to move out to places, people and situations that we have not encountered before. God has wonderfully taken 35 of our church family to Africa for an extraordinary two weeks but now challenges all 350 of us to discover how to apply our extraordinary faith to our daily lives such that each day is extraordinary. How through each one of us can our extraordinary faith impact the communities we live and work in? In this new land that God is giving us all of us are called to be missionaries and ministers of the gospel.

**He (God) is with us** - read v 5 – “Jesus invited people to enter into the Kingdom of God...it is a bracing world, not safe and predictable, but an exhilarating place where our deepest and best desires are met and where we find the love, forgiveness, significance and challenge we desperately crave. It is the kingdom in which Christ is King and where we find ourselves refreshed, elated, even trembling with anticipation. The Church is meant to offer a taste of that kingdom to anyone who comes near...” Graham Tomlin - Provocative Church. Where God calls us and what God call us to be can never be safe for he is at work! He has pledged himself to us, it is the people of God, his Church, you and me who will build his kingdom of love and justice for he is with us and will never leave or forsake us.



#### Witness: questions to discuss

*This section over the next term will give more opportunity for a prayerful reflective response to our Word section. At the next meeting of Small Group Leaders on Nov 10th there will be further opportunity for group leaders to share together and pray into all God is saying to us as a Church Family.*

1. Spend some time prayerfully considering the three pictures that emerged from the PCC Away Day and Staff and Leadership Meetings in the section 'Get Ready.' Share your thoughts and reflections.
2. Read the section 'Have Vision.' In response to one or more of the questions share your thoughts.
3. Read Graham Tomlin's statement in the final section. How do you think our Church, any church match up? Is our Church too safe? Share your thoughts.

**For further thought:** Israel's struggle in the 'promised land' begun under Joshua - Joshua 1 merges the military with the moral and religious. How easy does such a combination lie with us as Christians as we observe a world which grappling with the dangers of militant religious extremism?