

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. June 17th 2005

God's Gifts - the gifts in practice

The gift of teaching and evangelism

2 Timothy 4.1- 8



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Today in modern Britain we live in a society dominated by a multi choice, take your pick approach to spirituality where truth is seen as relative, personal and subjective and, as the Church, it can be all too easy for us to wring our hands and look back to some supposed golden era when everybody was taught at Sunday School, everyone went to church and everybody knew what to believe!

Though many 'itching ears' 2 Tim 4.3 have turned away from the truth and turned to 'myths' the reality is that spiritual hunger will never be satisfied until Christ is encountered. With the challenge to the Church's traditional teaching on moral issues, life and death, heaven and hell, faith and love (to name but a few!!) the opportunity exists for us to proclaim the gospel afresh for a new generation; the initiative lies with the church, with you and me to discover new ways of communicating the good news and teaching the faith to a new generation. The term 'evangelism' literally means to announce news or good news and is the responsibility of all Christians not just a few specialists!

'Evangelist' is mentioned three times in the NT (Eph 4.11, Acts 21.8. 2Tim 4.5) including 2 Tim 4.5 where alongside teaching and pastoring Timothy is exhorted to do the work of an evangelist (v5). The term 'evangelist' has been given a bad press due to unscrupulous American TV evangelists and although some do have a particular calling to be an evangelist, Evangelism – 'to announce good news' is something the Bible teaches belongs to God (Gal3.8), to Jesus (Luke 20.1) and to every church member (Acts8.4). In other words evangelism belongs to you and me! Some of us may preach good news, some of us may teach good news but all of us are called to **be** good news - in a world dominated by bad news!

How can we **be** good news? – 4 'b's!

1 Be genuine – let's not hide our faith away. When asked 'do anything special this weekend' do we say yes went to a great service at church! Allied to being genuine is being natural – do we naturally talk about spiritual things away from church? – Do we say 'I'll pray for you,' or 'I'll pray with you?'

2 Be prepared to take a risk! – inviting people to church, small group, Alpha etc. Risky business! We may risk our relationships with friends but let's not forget that doing nothing could risk their relationship with God!

3 Be loving – Evangelism begins with love. We will never be able to argue someone into the Kingdom of God but we can show the reality of God's love by simply loving them. Evangelism begins with the command of Jesus to 'love one another as I have loved you ...by this shall all men know that you are my disciples that you love one another.' John 13.34-35.



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. The BBC documentary 'The Monastery?' showed 4 people's search for spirituality. If you saw it share how it impacted you.
2. What do you think are the main challenges to the Church's teaching today?
3. In what way has the terrible incident involving the attack on Abigail Witchall been 'good news?' Do you think you of yourself as 'good news?'
4. When asked 'do anything special this weekend' do you say yes went to a great service at church!? Do you naturally talk about spiritual things away from church? – Do you say to people 'I'll pray for you,' or 'I'll pray with you?' If not why not?
5. How are you/ your small group responding to the challenge of Jesus to 'love another'?