

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 20th April 2008

Being Witnesses with Jesus – by the river

John 1:19 -34



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

"The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him" v 29. When John saw Jesus he exclaimed "Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world...this is the one...who was before mehe's the very reason I have been calling people to change their ways ... I have witnessed the presence of God's Holy Spirit on this man like no other... I testify that surely I have seen the very Son of God." Two thousand years ago John became a witness with Jesus there by the banks of the River Jordan, today we begin a new series exploring what it means for us today to testify for Jesus, to be witnesses with him and for him. Over the next three months we will find ourselves being with Jesus in a host of different situations and with an extraordinary mix of people from a nameless royal official full of faith to a secret disciple full of fear, from an unknown woman caught in adultery to a canny Samaritan woman drawing water from a well, from Lazarus brought back from the grave to his different as chalk form cheese sisters Mary and Martha. Real people in real places touched by Jesus.

Lives were transformed when people were with Jesus, not least the lives of his disciples who witnessed everything. It was in the company of Jesus, being with him, talking, sleeping, laughing, crying, living with him that changed everything for them. As they witnessed him with the extraordinary mix of people he encountered over those three years so they saw the presence of God at work loving, healing, forgiving, bringing new life and so they too were challenged and changed.

John was one of those disciples, not John the Baptist but John the brother of James, probably the youngest of the 12 – around 25 when Jesus called him to follow him and an old man of 90 when he died in Ephesus. And its John's gospel that we will be following over these next three months for 'being a witness' is key to John's gospel, there are many references to believing and non believing and John uses simple language with profound thought to tell the story of Jesus so that others would believe and have life!

He invites us too to 'be with Jesus' in the city, at the well, by the shore, and on the streets, to witness for ourselves and be changed by what we see ...more than this John invites us to be witnesses to others of the power and presence of Jesus. Which brings us to being Church! What we say and do when we gather together on Sundays (and in small groups!) can seem very strange to anyone walking in for the first time but in it all if Jesus is witnessed, seen and heard the greatest discovery will be made. Which brings us back to the river, to John the Baptist for when John saw Jesus coming towards him he says " Look here's Jesus" - the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, who brings hope and forgiveness and the chance to begin again (29); " Look here's Jesus" – the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit, the one who breaths the very breath of God into us (33); " Look here's Jesus" the very Son of God (34).

May we at St Paul's be a church, a community of people living God's way, learning to put humility, compassion, forgiveness, honesty truth and love at the centre of life .A people committed to witnessing " look here is Jesus."



Witness: questions to discuss

1 Ice breaker: Have you ever seen someone famous walking down the street or in an everyday situation? What did you say/do?

2 What animal do you think the church reminds you of and why? (read this out **after** sharing!
Graham Tomlin said oyster – not always pretty to look at from the outside, covered in wrinkles and hard edges but of immense value because they contain a pearl of priceless wealth)

3 How much does it really matter what we do together on Sundays - styles of worship etc?

4 How do we as a Church, small group, individual 'say' to the world " Look here's Jesus?"

How can we do this better?

5 Where can you 'see' Jesus at work? How can you 'witness' - tell of what you see?