

Redeemed for a Purpose

Valleys Family Church Sermon Stuart Wheatman, Sunday morning 13.5.12

Intro

- Deuteronomy means literally 'second law'. In this book Moses gives the law a second time, this time to the children of the generation that received the law on Sinai.
- As part of this giving of the law a second time Moses reviews where they have been and where they are going. He shows the people where they fit into God's bigger picture so they know what they are aiming at and what to avoid. At key times we need to do the same as God's people.
- Starting on Sunday 1st Jan 2011 and then for 2 sessions afterwards I spoke about the dream of this Church- our vision. I would recommend looking at the notes for these sessions on our website for a deeper understanding of our vision.
- Today I want to take a leaf out of Moses' book and give a condensed overview of where we have come from and where we are going so that we are all focussed on the same thing.

Read Deut 1:1-8

We were redeemed for a purpose- 1:8 '..go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers..to give them'

- It was an amazing victory when the Israelites were led out of captivity after 400 years as slaves in Egypt. We might perhaps think that this was the whole purpose of why the exodus happened- to set them free, but Moses here reminds them of God's greater purpose for them in the exodus- to possess the promised land of Israel. He brought them out to bring them in.
- In the same way we can rejoice that we have been forgiven and set free from sin by God. However the story does not end here. He has brought us out of slavery to sin to bring us into an inheritance. The promise is that the 'earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.' (Hab 2:14). The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached to all nations (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7:9-12). We have been called to fulfill the Great Commission- that is our purpose.
- **Our Vision.** The Great Commission is the commission by Jesus to His Church to make disciples of all nations. This is our purpose 'to build followers of Christ' and it will continue to be so despite our name change. This commission was given on a number of occasions by Jesus and is recorded in all four gospels and the book of Acts on each of these occasions-
Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 14:46-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8
-So we have in 4 different gospels the great commission to us given on various occasions and each one with the promise of POWER! We have been commanded to build followers of Christ and also empowered to do so. Hallelujah!

We must not miss our window- 1:2 'It is eleven days journey from Horeb..to Kadesh Barnea'

- Horeb is Mount Sinai. It should just be an 11 day journey to the Kadesh Oasis from where the 12 men were sent to spy out the promised land of Israel. However, due to the negativity from 10 of the men who returned and the resulting unbelief in the camp of the Israelites as a result they were not able to go in and possess the land and the task passed onto the next generation.

- This is our window of opportunity to fulfill the great commission. Throughout Christian history there have been generations who took the great commission seriously and those who didn't. This is our watch- let's not be asleep on the job and be a generation who neglected the call of God on our lives.
- I came to Wales in about 1987 after being a Christian for 1 year. Before coming to Wales whilst I was seeking the Lord at Spring Harvest someone had a picture for me that the place I was going to was like a wheat field about to be harvested and many would be saved. I also had pictures of a stadium packed with worshippers. John Wimber came to Cardiff in about 1989 and a prophet shared a vision of the stadium in Cardiff packed with people worshipping God & people being healed etc. These were promises of revival again in Wales- just like the promise of God to Abraham to give the land to his children, and yet I thought these promises would be immediately fulfilled, but here we are many years later. However, though it lingers, wait for it, "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay" (Habakkuk 2:3). We had a promise when we started this Church from Is 60:22 The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the LORD; in its time I will do this swiftly." Again I thought this would happen immediately, but the promise was 'in its time'. We need to exercise faith and BE READY so as not to miss what God is about to do. Some have given up hoping for revival because of past disappointments- Prov 13:12 'Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life'. That tree of life is worth persevering for! Revival is coming and it will be wondrous! "Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things!" (Psalm 72:18 NKJV) Let's not be like the generation who bottled out in unbelief- this is our window of opportunity- let's take it.

There will be opposition- 1:4 '...after he had killed Sihon king of the Ammonites...and Og king of Bashan'

- Satan really did not want Israel to come into the promised land and he raised up enemies to oppose Israel. Often what is true physically in the O.T is true spiritually in the N.T. In Eph 6:12 'For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places'.
- Satan would do anything to try to stop God's Kingdom coming to this region and we need to be wise to his schemes. As we see this opposition coming from the most unlikely places we need to make sure we don't give in to it, but rather overcome it with the authority we have in Christ.
- The armour of God is our understanding and declaration of who we are in Christ and our confidence in His protection and in what He has done. No matter what Satan throws at us we know by faith God will see us through- this is our shield. When he tries to condemn us we repent before God and accept our righteousness in Christ through the cross- this is our breastplate of righteousness. When he tries to steal our confidence that we are going to make it to heaven we accept the hope of salvation as a free gift from Christ- this is our helmet. When he tries to trip us up by lying to us we overcome the lies with God's truth about us- girding up our loins with God's truth so as not to stumble. When he tries to make us fearful to tread on the rough terrain of sharing the gospel with others, perhaps through bad past experiences we choose to shod our feet with the wonderful knowledge that we are actually bringing good news to people and as heralds, rather than feeling shame, we should lift up our voice with a shout on the mountaintops. We take our weapon- God's Word and we use it as a sword slaying the Sihons and Ogs that come against us and dedicating ourselves to prayer to see victorious breakthroughs in our

mission.

- We must develop a Churchill determination to never give up.

We must not settle- 1:6 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain'

- This verse given to us when we left Abergavenny. We all get tempted to the easy life, settling with what we are comfortable with, but God moves us on to pioneer. The place of comfort and settling will be different for each of us- it will affect what we give in terms of time, money, faith, energy to the things of God.
- David said to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing." 1Chron 21:24- he knew there was a cost to obeying the Lord.
- If we are to see the Great Commission fulfilled it will take a pioneering spirit. We need to continually be a pioneering people.

John Wesley- A small man (he was 5 feet 6 inches in height and weighed about 120 pounds), Wesley always had to perch on a chair or platform when he preached. He averaged 15 sermons a week, and as his *Journal* indicates, he preached more than 40, 000 sermons in his career, traveling the length and breadth of England - altogether more than 250, 000 miles - many times during an age when roads were often only muddy ruts. A contemporary described him as "the last word ... in neatness and dress" and "his eye was 'the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived.'" By emphasizing morality, self-discipline, and thrift to the deprived classes, Wesley has been credited by some historians as being a major force in keeping England free of revolution and widespread social unrest during his day. He coined the famous phrase: 'I look upon all the world as my Parish'. Large crowds of up to 20,000 were drawn to hear this eloquent, soberly dressed man evangelising, expounding and converting. Sometimes he gave offence to other priests as he preached in their parishes but he made use of fields and in streets in which he could be heard. Wesley's talents lay not only in preaching the gospel vocally however. He began to write hymns, one of his most famous pieces being 'Love Divine all Loves Excelling'. Wesley also put his mind to medicine: he set up free clinics, which were some of the first in England to use electricity for medical purposes.

Where are we going- our strategy to make disciples here and in the nations- establish and grow Churches

- **Our strategy.** Acts 14:21-23 tells us that the early Church fulfilled Jesus' commission by preaching the Gospel and establishing strong local Churches in each area. Our strategy is to do the same- to establish Brynmawr as a strong local Church in our community and to preach the gospel and plant Churches into unreached peoples in the surrounding areas, Wales and the nations. The local Church is the 'hope of the world' (Willow Creek quote). We are to be apostolic- i.e. Have the D.N.A to 'send out' like the Church in Antioch which sent out Paul and Barnabas to plant Churches. This will develop more as we grow. Our joining Newfrontiers has been key to this part of our strategy- we have become more outward looking, being part of what is doing in the world. This will continue to grow over the coming year as the welsh region is developed- presently ourselves, Swansea (The Hill Church) & Rhiwbina Baptist in Cardiff. Terry Virgo started Newfrontiers about 30 years ago and has now handed over to a new generation of Apostolic leaders. This is an exciting time of transition and growth. Each of these leaders has experience Church planting and their job is to oversee and establish Churches either here in the U.K or abroad or both. Those they oversee are called their Apostolic Sphere. It is based on relationship. We are part of Colin Baron's Apostolic sphere (he is in Manchester) with Andrew Davies directly overseeing us. Dave Devenish at Woodside Church in Bedford has close links with Colin Baron. Through this they have decided to put on the Stoneleigh Bible weekend next year. This will help us further become part of the bigger picture.
- Acts 2:40-47 gives us elements essential to growing healthy Churches. We have incorporated 8 of these key elements into what we do. For each we need to take responsibility to implement them as a Church, but also as individuals:
- **Discipleship- V42** 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine'. Been good to have support from Rhiwbina especially on the teaching front. We will continue to get support from outside but also develop our preachers internally. Like to do some

training sessions on how to preach & how to lead a Bible study. Also bringing new people on through homegroups taking bible studies. Let's each of us make it a personal goal to surrender to Jesus and follow Him this next year. Let's ask God to give us a fresh understanding of His Word & hunger for it. Let's spend quality time in His Word.

- **Evangelism- v41**- '3,000 souls were added'. Exciting initiative from Apostolic Church & other contacts working together to evangelise Blaenau Gwent. We have used various methods of outreach & should continue to do so rather than getting stuck in a rut. Youth Alpha is being planned to run shortly in local Cafe. Winchestown went well last year and we are planning a return outreach there in the summer but are still seeking God about the details of this outreach. The passion play touched many again this year and many that the team spoke to yesterday in Brynmawr said they had been touched by it. We are again taking our Sunday meeting down to the Brynmawr Fete on 24th June. We want to develop a culture of naturally sharing the gospel with the lost and inviting people to meetings. This means being willing to collect people and accompany them to meetings to break the fear barrier in non-Christians. We have a number of walks and trips planned that would be great starting points to invite friends and family to in order to break the ice- let's make the most of opportunities.
- **Fellowship- v42**- 'they continued steadfastly in ..fellowship'. - expansion of homegroups to 2- we need to consolidate this & strengthen both groups, identify potential leaders and expand further. The homegroups need to be places of close fellowship- all dedicated to them & one-another. Socials important- regular same sex socials to invite friends to & reach neighbours.
- **Prayer -v42** - They 'continued steadfastly ..in prayers'. As a leadership team we have recently reviewed prayer in the Church. We have decided that as leaders we need to be praying together more and so we have alternated our leaders meeting so that one is prayer and one is business. We have found that our regular Tuesday prayer group has seen some great answers to prayer and aim to see this group growing in numbers as well as effectiveness in praying. We want to create a culture of prayer within the Church and make prayer meetings more accessible to all. Newfrontiers have a 3 per-year retreat for prayer and fasting over a 2-day period in Peterborough- this is a great way to get connected with what God is doing in the UK and the world. We need to pursue fasting more as a Church and focussed prayer. We want to see breakthroughs in healing & deliverance as we pray for people.
- **Presence of God-v43** - 'Then fear came upon every soul'. The Church is the dwelling place of God by His Spirit, both corporately and individually. We want our meetings to be characterised by the moving of God's Spirit, for God to have space to speak to us. We want to see more dynamic times of ministry on Sundays and homegroups. More and more we want to see people being baptised in the Spirit as a regular occurrence. We want to see more of a release of the prophetic in all we do. Part of the reason for the teaching on the Kingdom of God we have been covering is to raise faith levels to see God's Kingdom coming in power. We have a responsibility as Church and as individuals to seek God's face in this.
- **Ministry- v43** – 'and many signs were done through the apostles'. The apostles led the way but did not have exclusive claims to spiritual gifts, but instead laid the foundational teaching that each member of the body has a part to play and that God given each member spiritual gifts to equip us for service. We long to see more use of the gifts as we meet on a Sunday, in homegroups, but also in evangelism. We have done some prophetic evangelism and will continue to pursue this amongst other means of outreach. We want to develop new ministries and train people up more- if there is an area of training you feel we need to cover let us know. We have

successfully implemented a welcome team. I would like to get an advertising team together- let me know if interested.

- **Mercy - v45** -They 'sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need'. Was great having Diana sharing about the work of Compassion in child sponsorship. We would like as a Church to sponsor a child and will give details of this soon. We have started doing more as a Church related to mercy- we have 3 trained to run the CAP course and have run it once for church folk. We would like to do our second course at some point and make it more evangelistic. Church on the Rise is now a CAP centre so it would be good to work more with them. Ebbw Vale has a Food Bank which Stu used for someone recently. It is an outreach opportunity we can develop. The recent litter pick for Hope 2012 and also our Winchestown litter pick went well and were a good way of blessing the community and interfacing with local groups such as Council and Keep Wales Tidy. We need to continue to pursue avenues this year that will alleviate poverty and bless the community.
- **Worship- v46-47** – 'So continuing daily..praising God'. We have expanded our music team to 2 groups of musicians to facilitate practise and development, but are presently having to borrow from each other quite a bit. We have updated our PA mixer and will continue to update the system until we get the best sound for our venue. We want to create a culture of worship, where we are continually giving thanks for what God is doing. We would like to encourage more giving of testimony in meetings to glorify God and increase faith. We would like for each of us to be taking steps forward in our expression of worship to God. We want to train people in how to lead worship, play instruments etc. We would like to see worship songs being written, more new songs being learned, greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit in worship. This can happen through teaching on a Sunday, experimentation in homegroup but also through exposure to what is happening in the greater body of Christ.

Summary

- We were redeemed for a purpose- the Great Commission
- We must not miss our window
- There will be opposition
- We must not settle
- Establish and grow Churches- 8 key areas of health

Finance report- Jenny

Song- *Father of Creation*