

Apostolic Ministry

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 23rd October 2011

Intro-

- Sometimes words in scripture, and words Christians use can sound confusing to those who are 'not in the know'. It can just become meaningless jargon unless explained. If I were to use the terms 'systolic' and 'diastolic' there would be some in the room who would be nodding with understanding and others who would be looking at me a bit funny. Yet both terms are essential to our health as they refer to our upper and lower levels of blood pressure.
- This morning I want to look at the term 'apostolic'. Again some may be nodding in agreement, whilst others are looking strangely at me. However, we will see that the world's very life, and the health of the Church, depends on not only our understanding, but also our application of the Apostolic.
-

Read Eph 4:1-16

Jesus is the ultimate Apostle

- Jesus is our ultimate role model for being apostolic. Heb 3:1- 'great Apostle & high priest of our confession'- He excels at all gifts & they all derive from Him, so how did He model it to us? In order to understand how Jesus was apostolic we need to first understand what is an apostle?
- **An Apostle is one who 'goes'**. Greek word=Apostello=to send, apostolos='sent one' (not Apostolos Vellios, a footballer for Everton!).

I first met Sarah when she visited our Church in Abergavenny from London. Soon word got back to her that I was 'interested'. I made a nervous phone call, and arranged to meet with her in London. She walked me all over London but would not be ready for a relationship until she moved to Abergavenny years later. When you love someone you are willing to 'go and get them' no matter how far away they are.

In the film 'Taken' Liam Neeson travels miles to recover his abducted daughter and eventually does so.

Love compels you to go, you cannot stay. One aspect of the Apostolic is the inability to 'stay', love compels you to 'go'. Pioneer- going, not settling in mentality-

Keith Green- Jesus commands us to go- Matt 28:18-20.

- John 3:16- the Father so loved us He sent Jesus, i.e Jesus was sent by the Father as our Apostle to rescue us, and Jesus was willing to go. In our passage from Ephesians it highlights Jesus' Apostolic 'going' with these words:

v9 'He also first descended'...v11 'He Himself gave'

- Ever been comfortable somewhere and had to leave to go on a long journey? If you were in glory would you want to leave? Jesus left the glories of Heaven and travelled a long way to save us. He was downwardly mobile according to these verses in Ephesians and according to Philipians 2- He descended on our behalf and was even willing to give gifts to us on His return home. How far would we be prepared to go, or be inconvenienced to see someone else's salvation? Are we too

- willing to use our gifts to beautify the Church?
- **An Apostle is a servant.** This too is modelled by Christ's life- Jn 13:16- servant not greater than master, nor apostle than sender- then He knelt and washed feet as our example of the apostolic- Love serves- Jesus loved Church- washing her- Sarah helping me when sick- will we do same for the Church? Phil 2:5-8 Didn't exploit position. (Peter Lewis Glory of Christ). Too big for small job too small for big job. Ministry=serving. Jesus obedient unto death. NT apostles obedient to the message unto death. Don't give up until 'well done good & faithful servant'. Gethsemane- knelt again- 'not my will'- Lk 22:39-44
- **An Apostle is someone delegated and empowered to do a job on behalf of another.** Jesus came on behalf of the Father to do what the Father wanted done- our salvation (John 3:16).
- An Apostle speaks in sender's name- e.g. 'open up in the name of the law'- Jesus' teaching not His own-Jn 7:16, 12:49, 17:10,49, 14:24.
- An Apostle is a servant sent by a master with their authority behind them- Jn 13:16- apostle not greater than sender.

E.g. entrusted with keys etc. A king sending messenger with a message sealed with his ring-seal of authority. Police representing the queen-delegated authority.

Ambassador- represents another country- 2Cor 5:20- we are Christ's ambassadors, Eph 6:20- gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains- we are from another kingdom & we bring that kingdom into this kingdom.

The miracles of Jesus were not done in His own name (authority)- John 10:25, 14:10. We are to do miracles in our sender's name- that is Jesus. Signs of Apostle=signs & wonders (2Cor 12:12) due to authority they walk in (Christ's).

- **Application-** become more like Jesus- whatever our gift is- look to Jesus as our role model. We are changed and being changed into His image.
- Look for yourself afresh at the apostolic mission of Jesus. Do a study from John's gospel on the word 'sent/send/sending'. John noticed the apostolic ministry of Jesus and wrote about it- it could be called the Apostolic gospel.

Jesus gives Apostles to the Church.

- V11- *'...He Himself gave some to be Apostles'*
- **The 12-** unique witnesses of Christ- hence the need of Apostolic authority regarding the Canon of Scripture. The Apostles dwelt with Jesus and were experts at how He thought and taught- they knew Him- they knew His favourite foods, His sense of humour, what He looked like, the expressions He used and the tone of voice He used. They were also witnesses of His resurrection- the foundation of our faith.
- **The 70/72** sent out by Christ as He approached Jerusalem before His crucifixion.
- **Paul** – one abnormally born- i.e He saw resurrected Christ after the ascension.
- **Others** (Barnabas Acts 14:14; James Gal 1:19 and Acts 15:13-21; Andronicus & Junias Rom 16:7; Silas?; Rev 2:2 -Ephesus- tested false Apostles)
- **Apostles are Church planters.** Jesus said 'I will build My Church'- the apostolic is centred around building Church. The Apostles in NT preached and left behind healthy Churches (Acts 14:21-23; 16:5, 18:22-23).
- **Apostles lay foundations-** 1Cor 3:10 'as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation'- e.g. Teaching on grace=key, doctrine.
- **Apostles are fathers** -Paul 1Cor 4:15 (10,000 instructors but not many fathers, in Christ I have begotten you through the gospel). Provide oversight of Churches and

- develop other leaders and teams.
- **Today-** much needed role- says here in Ephesians that these gifts are needed to bring the Church to maturity- surely this is true in every age until Christ returns. Today missionaries in all sorts of fields, but N.T model of an Apostle is one who plants Churches and strengthens Churches.
- Newfrontiers as an Apostolic movement. How it will work in practise. Not authoritarian but relationship.
- Do you know people that are apostolic? Recognise and work with these gifts- we need apostles. Are you apostolic? Develop the gift, don't neglect it like Timothy did, stir yourself up. Be accountable and under authority- Paul waited until He was sent out even though Jesus commission Him on day 1 there was a training period first, before the Holy Spirit put it on the hearts of leaders at Antioch. Be willing to train and learn from others.

We are to be an Apostolic people.

- *V12- '...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry'*
- Apostles release the Church into being more apostolic. All the saints are to take part in the work of ministry, and that means to varying degrees being apostolic. We are all to be apostolic, but not all are apostles. We are all to be evangelistic, but not all are evangelists. We are all to be pastoral, but not all are pastors. How apostolic are you? Our great commission= to be an apostolic people.
- **The shift** over 40 times in John verb 'sent' used in relation to Jesus mission as the Apostle of the Father 'must do works of one who sent me' etc. But there is a shift towards the end of His ministry to us- **Jn 14:12-14**- works Jesus did in Father's name (authority) we will do in His name (authority). **Jn 20:20** 'as Father SENT me I SEND YOU'. **Matt 28:18-20** 'all authority=mine so go in my name'. We preach the good news of the kingdom- Jesus on the throne
- **Learn to wait on the Spirit-** **Mt 10:19-20**- 'it will be given you what to speak, for it is not you who speak but the spirit of your father who speaks in you'. **Mt 10:27**- 'whatever I tell you in the dark speak in the light & what you hear in the ear preach on the rooftops'
- **Mark 3:14**- 12 appointed **to be with Him** that he might send them out to preach, heal, cast demns- by dwelling with Jesus we become more apostolic- we can represent our sender by first knowing him.
- How many people in Brynmawr have lived in England as a percentage? How many people here today have? Why a difference- God loves Wales and is doing something apostolic in our day.
- Catch the vision for church planting. Catch the vision for regions here- homegroups becoming church plants. Catch the vision for mission trips, momentum, being willing to travel, being willing to move.
- Churches can become comfortable if just growing too big- plant out.
- Testimonies of apostolic experiences.

Summary

- Jesus is the ultimate Apostle.
- Jesus gives Apostles to the Church.
- We are to be an Apostolic people.

Song: *Father of Creation / There's a call to the people of Zion*