

All too quickly got to the end of our three weeks here

It has been an immense privilege to be with you.....very sad saying farewell today.....

Say Thank You:

- to each of you for the warmth of your welcome
- to all those who have shared in the programme that we have run
- to John & Jean Palmer for being such generous hosts during our stay
- and all those who have opened your homes to us and fed us so well....
- special thanks to Susan for inviting us to come.....and for trusting us to minister to you....you are very blessed in having her as your Vicar.....we look forward to staying in touch with her and with you and praying for you in the years to come.....

Shared with the staff & vestry on our retreat last weekend

- our sense of the immense potential here.....
- and the opportunity you have to jump into the deeper things of God....and into the Kingdom-building work to which He is calling you.....
- **to not settle** for where you have already got to on the journey.....but to go deeper into the More that God has for you in the Spirit.....and into the Wider impact He wants to make in Richmond through you.....

These have been our twin themes during these weeks.....the call to renewal in the HS.....which then impels us outwards to join the Spirit in His mission to build God's Kingdom in the world.....on the "["earth as it is in heaven"](#)"

Second of those two themes that I want to unpack a little bit further this morning, looking particularly at the sending out of the 72 in Luke 10.....which has a continuing relevance to the church today....

- if only the 12 sent out (as are in ch9) we might say that only the apostles were sent to do the same works that Jesus did of preaching, healing, exorcising.....
- but the sending of the 72 to do exactly the same things tells us that this is for the many, including us.....get no sense in Luke 10 that the 72 specially selected.....chosen because of their greater competence or readiness....looks more like Jesus went '[you, you and you](#)'....and happened to add up to 72!.....

So this is a wide, inclusive commission to go and continue doing the works of Jesus.....

- that we see continuing through Paul and others in Ephesus in Acts 19

- which has continued down 2000 years of Christian history, including those who brought the gospel to NZ 200 years ago.....
- **and NOW of course the baton has been passed on to US**....we are the 72 for this place & our generations.....and THE TASK is the same....to GROW GOD'S KINGDOM.....to RELEASE God's Kingdom.....to unleash it, into the world.....that God's Kingdom might grow right in the heart of the Kingdoms of this world.....this is now **OUR RESPONSIBILITY** as co-workers with the HS.....it is your responsibility, along with the other churches, to do that here in Richmond....

HOW you are to do that will need to be reflected on prayerfully, as I know you are already doing.....**but in broad-terms you are to do it just as Jesus asked the 72 to do it.....which will have at least 5 dimensions to it:**

1. You are TO LIVE AT CLOSE QUARTERS with the people around you

- **Jesus sends the 72 “where He was about to go”**know that Jesus spent His ministry travelling from village to village in Galilee.....immersed in the life of the people of the day.....
- **the key command in His Briefing** is “Go!....I’m sending you OUT.....”
- **asks them to pray** that God will “SEND OUT workers into His harvest field” (not a prayer for more workers...prayer that the workers would GET OUT into the fields)....
- **tells them to “enter” houses** (v6)...to “stay” in them (v7)....to “enter” towns (v8)...to sit and eat with people.....

This is to be a mission right in the thick of life, in the heart of the community.....the wheat is to grow up right alongside the weeds.....it will be a Kingdom *within* the kingdoms of the world.....AND IT WILL ONLY GROW THERE if that is where the 72 then & now live & move & have our Christian-being!....

Christian mission always begins with incarnation....entering into the lives of the people.....moving into their neighbourhood.....living at close quarters with them.....loving them from right alongside.....as the place from which we can, like the 72, speak of Jesus, pray for the sick and help people out of the things that hold them captive.....

We need to live at close quarters with the people around us.....

2.in THE SPECIFIC PLACES TO WHICH HE SENDS US

Clear from v1 that the 72 were sent to very specific places....is a strategy & method here.....sent "to every town and place where He was about to go"....sent to quite specific destinations....'you 2 there...you 2 over there'.....and they were effective there because these were the places that Jesus would be at work in.....

If we are going to be effective co-builders of the Kingdom with Jesus....then we shall need to listen to + be obedient to the specific direction that He gives us.....

- applies to us individually 'what do YOU want me to do, Jesus....where do you want me to serve you.....is this where you are sending me.....am I still in the right place?....

- and it applies to you as a church.....of the many things you could be doing, what is God ASKING you to do....what are the primary things He is asking of you at this point in time?.....

This may well be a juncture here at HT at which to pause and ask just that question prayerfully....of the many good ideas where are the God-ideas?.....what is He asking you to commit to NOW as His particular plan and purpose for HT Richmond at this moment in time?.....what are the places to which He is sending you....because that is where He is particularly at work.....

Immerse yourselves in the lives of those around you
Do the things that He tells you to do.....

3.....LIVE DISTINCTIVE LIFESTYLES

There would be no missing the 72.....MARKED OUT BY :

- the simplicity of their lifestyle.."don't take a purse or bag or sandals" v4
- the sense of single-minded resolve..v4 "do not greet anyone on the road"

- the faith that they had to exercise for even the basic requirements of life...a roof over their heads...food in their stomachs....money for necessities.....

- the blessing that they dispensed to others...v5 "when you enter a house, FIRST say 'Peace to this house'"....blessed those they met.....

- their prophetic boldness in speaking to a world that didn't welcome the word or the wonders of God.....

Wonder whether we are too similar to the world...whether in our attempt to live IN the world we become too much LIKE the world.....end up with a camouflaged church & camouflaged Kingdom hardly distinguishable from the kingdoms of the world.....**example of 72 maybe poses for us some de-camouflaging questions:**

- can we live more simply.....

- with a greater resolve to be kingdom-builders 1st & foremost...

- learn to live more by faith.....even for material things.....

- be people known as those who give rather than take....who consciously bless the people & community around you

- who can none the less speak clearly into the evils of the world.....

How can we as Christians and as local church throw off the camouflage so that the Kingdom becomes more evidently visible and audible to those around?

4. Is God calling you to live with A GREATER EXPECTANCY OF THE MIRACULOUS?

Jesus sent out the 72 not only to preach that the Kingdom of God was near....but also to **DEMONSTRATE IT** by healing the sick....[QUOTE v 9](#)

In Ephesus we read about Paul preaching in the synagogue + having daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for 2 years....but that right alongside the preaching & proclamation “[God did extraordinary miracles through Paul](#)”and in a context where **preaching & healing were happening side by side** we read that “[the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour](#)” and as people gave testimony to changed lives “[the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power](#)”

We need to be careful that we don't put asunder what God has joined together.....if the KoG is a breaking into the present of the future age...if it is something of heaven invading earth....then **alongside our proclamation we need a greater expectancy of the miraculous**...hope that the prayer for healing offered last Sunday can become a regular part of what you do together here.....

5. Important to say finally that as Kingdom-builders WE ARE TO DO ALL OF THIS TOGETHER.....it is a 72-thing.....it is a 2 by 2-thing.....we do it all individually...BUT WE DO IT ALONGSIDE AND ARM-IN-ARM WITH ONE ANOTHER:

- it is the whole people of God who are called to live IN the world....

- it is ALL God's People who are called to find their specific place of service....

- we need a de-camouflaged CHURCH....that lives differently.....

- and A CHURCH that gives equal emphasis to the word, works & wonder of God.....expecting to see today the same miracles as the 72 saw in Palestine and Paul saw in Ephesus....

Astonishingly God has added YOU to the 72....made YOU co-workers with Him in the building of the Kingdom.....what a privilege!.....**just as the 72 reported back with joy all that God had done through them**.....**so Anne and I shall be looking in from the UK, rejoicing as God uses THIS 72 to grown His Kingdom in Richmond all those miles away**.....and we shall find ourselves saying....we were there once!!!!.....rejoicing with you at all that God has accomplished here.....**PRAY**