

SERMON NOTES – RENEWAL OF DISCIPLESHIP – June 2015

The season of prayer has been very refreshing and liberating – *“For this reason I remind you to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands” - 2 Tim 1 v 6*

I hope it has helped you personally because it has certainly helped us as a church to be more discerning and intuitive to the ways of God

We have glimpsed afresh His holiness and realized how much more we need to put on a lifestyle of personal holiness so that we fellowship with Him at a deeper level.

When we are near to God, we hear His voice with greater certainty – not an indistinct understanding but a direct, single, uncompromising and clear call.... *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me”,* Jesus said. (John 10 v 27)

His voice at times will be a direct challenge or as Tino so wonderfully taught us last week, it will come as a time of refreshing and we will have a new heart, an encouragement for the challenges we face daily.

I think all of us can say amen to hearing and feeding on the rhema word for each one of our own circumstances.

One of the greatest gifts in the church is encouragement.

It's not a specific gift that is attached to an office (i.e. that of the pastor or an evangelist or a preacher etc. nor an elder or a deacon or a housegroup leader etc...) – it's a gift that everyone of us can use.

Try it; you will be amazed to see a breakdown of difficult situations.

Graham Cooke (now residing in the USA) gave the examples many years ago (pre the era of texting on your mobile phone) of sending out postcard reminders or messages of encouragements to folk in his church. He got back after a very difficult ministry trip abroad and his secretary asked if he was OK. “Why” he said. “Well your pigeon hole is stuffed full of postcards from people sending you a word of encouragement.”

You see, God knows when we are hurting and when we're going through tough times of testing so He sends His children alongside the ones who are

hurting to encourage them – do you remember the teaching I brought a few months ago about the two different Greek words for bearing one another's burden?

Firstly, there's a burden that is crushing and cannot be carried by an individual so this impossible load must be carried by others too. (*Baros* – a weight, heaviness; a burden, anything grievous and hard to be borne)

And secondly there is a burden for each one of us to bear in our own daily lives which is right and proper. (*Phortion* – a burden which must be carried by the individual, i.e. as something personal and hence is not transferrable)

People say many positive things about Kingsway. Let them add that it's a place which excels in encouraging you.

Let's recap on our journey thus far this year

We had a lot of great insight, revelation and teaching on the various aspects of the Kingdom of God – **we are in His Kingdom and what does the King ask each of us to do?**

Malcolm Hedding brought us a specific word last year about this church **being properly aligned with God.**

So we then took a full month to look at our attitude in the Kingdom based around the commands found in Romans Chapter 12

- Having the right attitude to God (He's our heavenly Father)
- Having the right attitude to yourself and one another (We're blood brothers and sisters)
- Having the right attitude to the world.

From this has flowed a series of teachings on renewal and we have looked so far at renewal of our personal devotion or walk with God and then renewal of our encouragement.

Today, I want us very briefly to look at **renewal of our discipleship.**

When Rob gave me this subject, inwardly I thought, "How am I going to develop this?" But as we've gone through our season of prayer I have begun to see some basic threads of which we all need to be reminded.

So let's remind ourselves what a **DISCIPLE** is. It simply means a follower; an adherent. It implies that you follow comfortably the cause or the one who is leading and guiding you.

The root of the word is the same root for **DISCIPLINE**,

Being a **DISCIPLE** or follower of Jesus means that we follow a **DISCIPLINED** lifestyle and walk with Him

Now this is where it starts to get a little uncomfortable.

“The Lord disciplines and chastens all He loves” – so there will be times when we will feel His hand of discipline to correct us.

But the aspect of **DISCIPLINE** I want to focus on is the thought that **DISCIPLINE is training and equipping** in order that we might excel or perform at a better level of service just like an athlete might engage in his or her training regime.

So I am going to propose a new word for the English language – **DISCIPLINESHIP**

DISCIPLESHIP is an easy concept to buy into but **DISCIPLINESHIP** implies that it's going to cost me and it may be a painful process sometimes!

If we are going to grow as individuals and grow as a church, the act of **DISCIPLESHIP** (or the **DISCIPLINESHIP** I spoke of) is the only route available for us.

An athlete trains and has a training rhythm or regime.

Let me ask a trained athlete here how they do this and if they enjoy the training programme.

READING - Daniel Chapter 1

Question: "What is Christian discipleship?" – [Link this to the story](#)

Being a DISCIPLE involves study, prayer and obedience.

1. We need put Jesus first in all things (Mark 8:34-38). Not the world view, the Jesus view. We need to **put off our self-centeredness** and put on Christ-centeredness. – **car sticker** saying, *“One life; live it”*

2. We must follow His teachings and **be doers** of His word.(John 8:31-32) Obedience is the supreme test of faith in God (1 Samuel 28:18), and Jesus is the perfect example of obedience as He lived a life on earth of complete obedience to the Father.
3. We are called to be fruitful and we do this by abiding in the vine (John 15:5-8). If the growing conditions are right, we don't have to strain to produce fruit as the Holy Spirit will accomplish this in us if provided we **remain in Him**.
4. Jesus said that we are to love one another and in this they will know that we are His disciples. (John 13:34-35). **Love is not an emotion; it's an act of the will**. We cannot be detached from the process and think more highly of others than of ourselves and we are told to look out for their interests of others (Philippians 2:3-54). "Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." What a great and glorious example
5. Tell others through engaged and active evangelism through **making disciples of others** (Matthew 28:18-20). We must share our faith and tell nonbelievers about the wonderful changes Jesus Christ has made in our lives. We all have something to offer because we all have a testimony of a changed life.

Rhythm of cultivating His presence

- Prayer (listening, meditating and reflecting)
- Bible reading and study of His word
- Fellowship – **don't stay away from church when things get tough**
- Praise and worship – **Jan's warbling**
- Good works - There was a rabbi who was taking a long journey to climb to the top of Mt. Sinai. As he was about to begin, a scorpion approached him and said that he also was going to the top of Mt. Sinai. "Would it be possible for me to ride on your shoulder on this journey"asked the scorpion? At first, the rabbi was adamant, "NO! You will sting me and leave me to die on the path!" But the scorpion was very persuasive and he finally convinced the rabbi that it would be stupid to sting and kill his ride to the top, because then the scorpion wouldn't get to the destination, either. So the rabbi consented and put the scorpion on his shoulder. When they had almost reached the summit, the scorpion suddenly stung the rabbi in the jugular vein, causing him to crumple to his knees, and start the painful death throes that accompany the scorpion's venom. ***The rabbi gasped, "Why? How could you do this? Why did you trick me?" The scorpion replied, "I didn't trick you-you knew what I was when you picked me up!"***
- Pursue faithfulness
- Action or engagement – don't stand on the sidelines

I think I have given you enough prompts and pointers for how we renew our **DISCIPLESHIP** so let's pray and then we will worship. *J A Savage – June 2015*