

Word Notes Sunday 01/05/16
Tony Hodge: Builders 1 – The Kingdom

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday, listen to the podcast if you missed the talk <http://www.newmarketcommunitychurch.co.uk/podcasts.htm>.)

Key Text: Matthew 22:1-14

We concluded The Story with “The End of Time”, a great celebration of redemption and restoration, the fulfilment of God’s plan for reconciliation and relationship. But what of today? Is it time to sit back, put on our spiritual slippers and wait for the finale? By no means! We live in the “Church Age” – the time when God’s love flows out through the Body of Christ, which is now the Church. What are the characteristics of these times and what is our place in them? Three key things Jesus set in motion that help us understand the times:

- He Brought the Kingdom - The Kingdom of God is near
- He Established the Church - I will build my Church
- He Established Community: Love God with all of your being and love your neighbour as yourself.

The Kingdom

When Jesus began to preach he zeroed in on one big topic – The Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:23). Jesus repeatedly spoke about the Kingdom being “at hand” or nearby. He describes the kingdom using picture language in many parables, especially in Matthew. Matt 22:1-14 is one such parable and in which you and I appear – there between verse 7, when the king destroys the towns for killing the messengers, and verse 11 when the king comes in to see the guests.

Can you spot yourself – are you a servant taking the message to the streets and lanes, maybe a party-goer enjoying the feast?

Problem

But there’s a problem. Being at the party is not enough to save you – the text is clear that all, good and bad, were invited and came. One of the crowd is wearing the wrong clothes and is chucked out to a place of suffering. If this seems a bit harsh then it may help to know that in many cases like this in the East a king would provide clothes for the guests, so it was the man’s choice whether to wear them or not.

Challenge

There are two challenges for us “Church Age” people from this story:

1. If you see yourself as a servant are you taking the invite out. When Jesus sent out the 12 and the 70 he told them to talk about the Kingdom. In saying the Kingdom was nearby Jesus was referring to the fact that he, the King, was present. Today God’s presence is within us if we carry that deposit of the Holy Spirit, so take the Kingdom with you as you go.
2. If you are one of the guests have you accepted the clothes offered by the King. We understand this to be salvation through Jesus – that we are “clothed with Christ” (Gal 3:27).

Application (*this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points*)

- 1, Are you uplifted by this parable or does it leave you a bit uncomfortable? Explain why.
- 2, With whom do you most identify in the story? What actions will you now take as a result of that?
- 3, Is the Kingdom something we help to build or is our role something else? What is our relationship to King Jesus and hence the Kingdom? Find & share Bible texts to support your understanding.
- 4, Read Luke 10:1-11 and discuss the following:
 - a) Given the Great Commission in Matt 28:18-20 which of the instructions Jesus gives the 72 do you believe apply to you today?
 - b) How do we carry those out?

Witness (*this is the bit where the cell talks, plans and prays about how to share the Good News*)

Pray for each other for specific opportunities, times, places, people where you can share the Kingdom.