

Word Notes Sunday 12/10/14

Tony Hodge – Relationship Restored

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Joshua 5:1-12

Once Israel crossed over the Jordan in faith and walked into their inheritance three significant events occurred:

Circumcision – an outward mark of inward change for those in covenant with God. Israel were once more a people of faith not fear, it also underlines that that are living under God's direction and protection if they can do such a thing in the sight of the enemy.

Rest – well so would you! But actually this is more than just a physical practicality – there would be rest in the Promised Land, even with Jericho nearby and Israel weak. God “spreads a table in the sight of our enemies” Ps 23:5.

Passover celebration – there is no suggestion that they had stopped observing this, indeed in some circumstances even when they were unclean they were to celebrate the Passover (Num 9:10) and God intended they were to continue even in what seemed to be hostile territory (Ex34:24). Even so a further sign that relationship is fully restored as they enter the Promised Land.

So, circumcised, rested and celebrated they are ready to face the enemy. What about Christians today?

Circumcision - Paul clearly sets out that this is of no importance for us (Gal 5:2 & 6, 6:15), instead we have a “circumcision done by Christ” when we are joined with Christ through baptism (Col 2:9-12) which sets us apart.

Rest - exactly what Jesus offers – “Come unto me all you who are heavy-laden” (Matt 11:28-30). Rest in the sight of our “enemies” (Ps 23:5). The foe is vanquished; Jesus HAS won the victory yet we know the enemy has not given up. Sometimes we may feel under attack, surrounded or all alone but Jesus says – I WILL give you rest.

Passover – We don't celebrate an annual Passover, instead every day we have Jesus as our Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7) we are rescued once and for all time through Jesus' sacrifice which we can celebrate as often as we eat/drink bread and wine in his memory. A special meal that Jesus instigated with his closest friends and with which he commands us to celebrate his gift of life.

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

Ask some to share briefly what their baptism means to them.

What are the similarities and the differences between circumcision and baptism (*hint: think about the physical and spiritual aspects of both*).

Israel rested even though not a single battle had been won and they were vulnerable. What can we learn from this about how we too can rest even when we are struggling?

Jesus celebrated the Passover as his “Last Supper” instigating a new celebratory meal for the new covenant. In what ways is this new celebration “superior” (as it were) to the former?

So – one with Christ through faith, rested and fed – are you ready for the fight?

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

Ask people to share any opportunities they had to witness over the past week. Pray for more and keep pressing on.