

Word Notes Sunday 04/09/16
Tony Hodge: : Guidance 1 – Vision and Purpose

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: Exodus 2:1-15, Matt 4:18-20, Acts 9:1-8

Moses, Peter and Paul all saw their lives changed through an encounter with God which gave their lives purpose. Moses future looked grim when he was born yet God's purpose in his life was not to be thwarted by circumstances – indeed they were shaped by them.

- Moses: Born a Levite, brought up to be Pharaoh's man but God had other ideas.
- Peter: Rough diamond who spoke his mind, became a speaker for God. Called to be a "fisher of men".
- Paul: Thought he was on God's team but needed to leave behind dead religion and walk in grace.

God had a vision and purpose for each of these men, is it any different for you and me – apart from scale? Look at all the people in Acts who get just one or two mentions, were they incidental to God's plan for salvation or fully taking their part and fulfilling their purpose? Then there are those individuals down through history who have stood up and "made a difference" for Christ. You may have your own heroes but my mind turns to those involved in social justice such as William Wilberforce and abolition of slavery (and other things too), the work of Thomas Bray and SPCK in setting up schools for the poor and Kier Hardy who with others started the Independent Labour Party campaigning for social action and pacifism.

But what of you and me? Do we have to find some crusade to set out on in order to fulfil God's purpose for our lives? Absolutely not and it may help if we come at this idea from a different angle.

Having Purpose is God meeting our basic needs.

People need purpose in their lives – this includes knowing we are valued and that our lives have meaning and significance:

- God valued Moses, and all the other infants Pharaoh tried to kill, and through his parents obedience and faith he was saved.
- Moses' life could have been one of the rich young playboy full of indolence and having no care for others. When Moses saw the plight of his fellow Israelites and started to do something about that his life gained meaning.
- You'd have thought being a Prince of Egypt was significance enough – but would Pixar had made the movie without the rest of the story – a man who served God and led his people to freedom.

As for us:

- Through salvation in Christ God shows how much he values our lives.
- We find meaning in the Great Command and Great Commission – there is work to be done.
- Our significance as members of the Kingdom of God, of heirs with Christ and members of God's family dwarfs any worldly accolade.

We can be inspired by the heroes of the faith, Biblical or through history, but remember that in the Kingdom the first shall be last and the last first and follow Jesus in the way of servanthood. Then we'll see that our value, meaning and significance is in him and not worldly position.

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

Where do we find "meaning" in our lives – has man always had "purpose" right from the start? What indicators of value, meaning and significance can you find in Genesis 2? What does that suggest to you about man's "purpose" then, now and ultimately after Christ's' return?

How did Peter and Paul's life purpose change when they encountered Jesus? Was that immediate or a process? What were the key things that happened?

PTO

How did your life's purpose changed when you made Jesus your Lord? Give time to pray about any issues that arise from that discussion.

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

Find some way to share with a non-Christian the purpose Jesus has brought to your life.