

Home Group notes for the week following 8th October 2017

DISCIPLESHIP: A Meaningful Life

AS WE GATHER

When Jesus told the parable of the vineyard and the tenants He was speaking directly into the spiritual disobedience of Israel, for whom the keeping of the Law had become an end in itself. The nation's spiritual focus had shifted from God the Creator and His plan for living a life of practical holiness in a loving and responsible way, to seeing the Law as a means to prosperity and earning God's protection.

**READING SCRIPTURE Exodus 20:1-4 + 7-9 + 12-20 Psalm 19 Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46**

THINKING TOGETHER

Jesus' parables each had one significant point / issue, which the details of the story illustrated, so the Jewish religious leaders knew exactly what Jesus meant when He related this parable (Matthew 21:33-46). He was exposing their murderous plot against Him (verses 45-46).

Our relationship with Jesus is more important than anything else. To deny Him is to deny life; but we cannot follow Jesus without paying a price. We have to deal with the tension of what we have been / are and what we want / are meant to be. If we are not God / Christ focussed we cannot become His people (Exodus 20:1-7 2 Corinthians 5:14-17).

What things can supplant God / Jesus in our lives? Discuss

Nothing we can do will make us right with God. Righteousness comes from God and we are made righteous by thrusting in Christ. Human achievements cannot earn salvation and eternal life with God (Philippians 3:4b-14).

**Why are God's laws / commandments referred to as lights for our paths? Discuss
(Psalm 19:7-11)**

**What do you understand by the phrase "clothed in the righteousness of Christ"? Discuss
(2 Corinthians 5:21)**

The elements of this parable are as important for us today as they were at the time Jesus related it – vineyard, Landowner, tenants, Landowner's servants, Son, other tenants.

**Using the following readings, are you able to identify the relevance of these elements for the world's nations today? (Isaiah 5:1-7 and 8:14-15 Deuteronomy 32:4 + 18
Romans 9:30-33 Hebrews 1:1-2 and 13:11-13 1 Peter 2:4-5)**

**What does this parable tell us about -
= God (Landowner)? Discuss
= human nature (tenants)? Discuss**

Jesus used this parable to make it very clear that He was not a prophet. Those who came before Him were messengers / servants of God; He was the Son (Matthew 21:37). He also made it clear

that He knew what lay ahead. He was not compelled to die, but went willingly and knowingly to death (Matthew 21:38-40)

How does knowing this make you feel about Jesus? Discuss

The parable ends with two pictures of the stone

- That which the builders rejected
- That which breaks those who stumble and crushes those on whom it falls

(Psalm 118:22-23 Isaiah 8:14-15 and 28:16 1 Corinthians 1:23 Daniel 2:33-35)

Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah. He was their stumbling block; but in His death He became the foundation stone of the Church and the corner stone which holds everything together – giving purpose and meaning to the lives of His followers

(2 Corinthians 5:18-20 Ephesians 2:19-22 1 Peter 2:9)

Christians are sometimes referred to as a ‘people of light’. Why? Discuss

IN CLOSING

The consequences of the Jewish leaders’ rejection of Jesus (Acts 4:8-12) are that the kingdom was taken from Israel and given to another “nation” (the Church). At the end of the age Jesus will come as the crushing stone and establish His own kingdom.

PRAYER

Almighty God,

in Jesus Christ we find the meaning and pattern of our lives.

Draw us closer to Him, that we may share in Christ’s sufferings and live in the power of Christ’s resurrection. Amen