

Westfield Sermon notes

Title: Be as Christ to the World

Readings: Micah 4; Acts 17:22ff

Preacher: Brian Holroyd

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This sermon can be found at: <http://www.westfieldurc.org/worship/sermons>

Sermon Notes / Comments:

The Micah passage:

- Swords into ploughshare & spears into pruning forks: story about the second world war swapping from cutlery to shell cases and back again
- The prophet says that the time is coming when things will be different and the time will come when things will be changed. This is different. In the New world you don't have swords instead of ploughshare and pruning forks instead of spears. One becomes the other!! It is not one instead of the other, one turns into the other
- It is when a person is bad or unjust you do away with them, you got get rid of him you change them into something better.
- In this vision there is nothing new they are transformed – things or people. All that is needed for the new order is already there. We have everything that is needed for peace and harmony.

The Acts Passage

- Jesus has the knack of changing people into something better
- And he commanded his followers to do something similar
- Paul in Athens preached the same sermon as Micah! It took some nerve to do it. Paul had plenty of nerve, and was a great preacher. He prepared carefully Acts 17:22ff is what he said.
- The Greeks had no record or tradition of the mighty acts of God so there was no use proclaiming to the Greeks that Jesus came as a fulfilment of prophecy. They needed another way and Paul was trying to find that.
- Paul uses the fact that there is a tomb to the unknown God, to show that they know there is something beyond themselves.
- Paul then says he will tell them what they are groping for.
- This is not new he says – he didn't want to do that as they would just see this as something new. He was showing that this was something changing from what they already had. NOT something new.
- When Paul was converted he was not a different man, he was a changed man. What was responsible for that? The Christian Gospel is the answer.

- One of the things that Jesus reveals to us is that we are not the slave of our environment. You are disabled, brought up in a bad home etc etc. People often try to explain away a weakness because of...
- This is not good enough – we as Christians were not created to be as weak and helpless as that!
- There is a way to break out of this 'weakness cycle' & that is love & Jesus.
- Changed from glory into glory. Transformed. This is what Jesus is so good at. Changing people into something far better.
- That is the gospel that people can be transformed by. How? By the transforming love of Jesus Christ and the church should be the custodian of that transforming power. The love of God.
- Somehow, we often fail. What is it that Mother Teresa has that the church doesn't? The answer; a depth of love that is rarely seen in this world.
- Jesus said his disciples were salt and light, but warned them what would happen if they lost their saltiness.
- Book Called Akenfield by Ronald Blythe which looked at country life. He describes the village blacksmith talking about Church goers. He says "...people use to go to chapel, they would go from 9 in the morning and never went home until 8 at night... a lot of bloody hypocrites... Suffolk use to worship Sunday not God... useless people...there were so many of them that they could have set the village on fire if they followed Jesus... All you heard from say is Sunday, Sunday, Sunday - not Jesus"
- One sentence that stands out is "There is enough Christians in Suffolk to set the place on fire if they followed Jesus"
- Isn't this like Wyke? It could be so different
- We need to take our faith seriously, to take our religion seriously!

Questions / thoughts and areas for discussion

- As always please read through the passages above.
- Paul was a great preacher – do you think that we have to be great to do anything for God?
- How similar are the people in Athens to the people in Wyke/Bradford now?
- What can we do, in a similar way to what Paul did in this story?
- How do we set Wyke on Fire?
- If we truly followed Jesus we could set Wyke on Fire. Do you think this is true? What is stopping us?
- Do we take our faith seriously? Do we take our religion seriously?
- What are we going to do differently because of what we have heard?

Please note these are Mark's thoughts etc on the sermon and may not be the Preacher's!