

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: 3 May 2015

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: What if It Rained?

Introduction: This talk, reflects on an Old Testament story involving the prophet Elisha, and asks how we can create the capacity to contain the 'extra' that God may want to send into our lives.

Review: (invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review)

Reflect:

Read: 2 Kings 3:1-24 in Good News Bible (see note below)

: The three kings (Joram of Israel, Jehoshaphat of Judah and the unnamed king of Edom) set out on a crusade without any instruction from God. What might we learn from their willingness to "make prayerless plans that they assume God will bless".

: Elisha calls for a musician to help him hear God. Bible scholar John Goldingay observes that, "In the Bible, if you want to seek God, you do so more often with the sound of noise and music than with silence". What is the group's own experience of hearing God? What part does music play in people's own times with God?

: The kings saw a natural disaster: Elisha was shown a divine deluge. How easy is it to see beyond the obvious and discern God's hand in the realities of everyday life? What would have been the effect if Elisha had not been consulted? What might we learn from that?

: Ditch-digging is hard work. In the Bible, receiving God's grace and provision often requires effort on behalf of the recipients. Can you think of any examples? What efforts might we need to make to retain God's blessing? (NOTE: the water was coming anyway. The ditch-digging didn't force God to send water, but did enable them to contain what God had sent. What can we learn from this insight?)

: David mentioned four things that we might need to 'dig out' in order to contain the living water of God's Spirit. They were:

Pretence: Matthew 15:8,9

Complacency: Revelation 3:15-17

Busyness: Luke 10:40-42

Sin: Galatians 5:19-21

How do people in the group respond to this list. And are there other 'ditches' that need to be dug out to contain God's Spirit in fuller measure?

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes. Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect - Respond

Respond:

Love for God

How might this passage encourage us to seek more of God's love?

Love for one another

How can you encourage one another to be ditch-diggers?

Love for neighbour & world

What one aspect of your life would you like to be 'dug deeper' in order to bless those around you this week?

And finally:

Before you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

Note on Translation

Some versions of the Bible (e.g. NIV) do not contain the instruction to 'dig ditches', whereas others (e.g. GNB) do. The Hebrew simply says, "Ditches, ditches". Some translators (e.g. NIV) take this as an idiom meaning 'there'll be water everywhere', whereas others take it as a command given through Elisha to 'dig lots of ditches' to contain the water that God will send.