

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: October 9th 2016

Speaker: Helen Paynter

Title: Encounter 4: Preaching

Introduction: In this talk Helen explored what is going on in preaching. We give a good chunk of our meetings over to preaching as we believe that this is a major way that God speaks to us - and therefore through which we encounter God.

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: use the readings below

Reflect:

- What makes a good sermon? Think of a preacher who you feel helps you encounter God in the Bible. What do they do that helps you?
- Read Nehemiah 8:1-2 and Ezra 7:10.
 - How did Ezra prepare for the reading and preaching of the word?
 - How did the congregation?
 - What are the responsibilities of the preacher and the listener in preaching?
- Read Proverbs 8:1-6. On Sunday we spoke about the 'moods' of wisdom: telling, commanding, entreating.
 - Can you think of any examples of these in the ministry of Jesus?
 - Are they all appropriate in a sermon? Is anything left out?
- Read Ephesians 6:17. How should we understand this metaphor for the word of God? Are there ways in which it might be misunderstood? How could we guard against these?
Now read Hebrews 4:12. Is this the same image, or slightly different? What have been your experiences of the word of God acting like this?
- In the light of this discussion, read this provocative quotation from Annie Dillard. Do you agree with it? If so, how will this change your encounter with God on a Sunday morning?
Why do people in church seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute? ... Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor

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 and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

Thornbury Baptist Church:

Following the Way of Jesus: Loving God - Loving One Another - Loving Neighbour & World

with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us to where we can never return."

- If you have time, look up some or all of these passages and discuss what they tell us about the importance of preaching AND about the role of the listener:
 - 1 Thess 1:4-5; 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16;

And finally:

As 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?

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