

## Christ Church Clifton

Spring Preaching Series – mornings and evenings

### Vision for 2012

Sermon One – Ezra 3:1-6

(Paul Langham, 8 January 2012)



### Reading – Ezra 3:1-6

*<sup>1</sup> When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled as one man in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Then Jeshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. <sup>3</sup> Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. <sup>4</sup> Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day. <sup>5</sup> After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred feasts of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD. <sup>6</sup> On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid. Ezra 3:1-6*

### Vision – what cannot yet be seen

Vision is given to us in scripture: to see the Kingdom of God come

This is God's mission, his passion, his vision

'Not that the church of God has a mission, but that the God of mission has a church'

So what does that look like for us here and what is our strategy for playing our part in seeing God's Kingdom come here in Clifton, in Bristol, in UK?

We believe the key is to ask the Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus: Christlikeness will be a core component of our vision.

### Clifton Bible Project

First week – first 8 chapters of Genesis, Matthew & Ezra

#### Genesis 1-8: Paradise Lost

Q: How many losses can you identify in Genesis 1-8?

The Enemy's big lie – 'This is normal'

#### Matthew 1-8: The Kingdom of God at hand

The extent of what we've lost is starkly drawn in the contrast between the Garden of Eden in Genesis and the Wilderness of Christ's temptation.

But once again, God sets foot on planet earth

Jesus understands his mission in terms of loss recovery

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10*

Q: How many signs of the Kingdom of God can you identify in Matthew 1-8?

The big lie – 'This can never be normal'

### **Ezra 1-8 & Matthew 1-8: Working for the Kingdom (Paradise restored)**

If we are to see the Kingdom of God come, we have work to do.

Ezra & Nehemiah – seen by church for centuries as powerful reminders of our need to rebuild what has been broken down.

Q: How many elements of our work for the Kingdom can you identify in Ezra 1-8 & Matthew 1-8?

*Ezra*

Cost

- 7:8,9 – journey took Ezra 4 months
- 2:64-69: c. 50,000 people / 8,000 horses, mules, camels, donkeys (i.e. most of them walked)
- finance: 2:68, 69 ('according to their ability')

Priority = worship (3:1-6)

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'despite their fear of the people around them'

Pray about any fear members of the group have at the moment – may be personal, may relate to change at Christ Church.

Claim the promises of scripture e.g. 'Perfect love casts out fear'

### **Questions for further thought**

Q: How many losses can you identify in Genesis 1-8?

Q: How many signs of the Kingdom of God can you identify in Matthew 1-8?

Q: How many elements of our work for the Kingdom can you identify in Ezra 1-8 & Matthew 1-8?

*Paul Langham, January 2012*