

## Questions from "Bread" September 13<sup>th</sup> 09 for triplets:

### Outline of talk:

#### A tale of 3 cities: Vision

- **Biblical Vision for towns and cities....A tale of 3 cities!**

### First City: Genesis 11:1-9 The city of Babel

#### God's intention for cities is to bring:

- *Refuge and community,*
- *Productivity,*
- *Innovation and creativity*

#### Satan's intention for cities is to bring:

- *Fear and isolation instead of refuge and community.*
- *Greed instead of productivity.*
- *Pride instead of innovation and creativity.*

#### Lessons of Babel:

- a) You will feel both God and Satan in any city
- b) Appreciate the good and encourage/feed off it.
- c) Expect God to use you to change the bad.

### Second City. Jeremiah 29: 4-14 The city of Babylon

1. There is a wrong way as church to respond to a city
2. There is a God way as church to respond to a city

#### 1. **Wrong way:** God alludes to 2 wrong agenda's.

##### A. **first** is the agenda of Babylonians themselves.

- **Assimilation** "you can live with us and have all the best jobs as long as you become just like us".
- **God's response? V6 increase there, do not decrease ie don't let them assimilate you.**

##### B. **second** wrong agenda that God addresses is **tribalism v8** don't listen to other prophets, they are not saying what I told them to say. previous chapter, Hananiah saying that God will judge city so wait, stay on the outskirts. *Mark Driscoll calls this BOMB SHELTER CHURCH.*

**Assimilation** means that I go into city and exploit for my own gain

**Tribalism** means that I stay on outside and on outside smile but on inside disdain,

#### 2. **Instead God's way:** V5,6, & 7 V5, 6, 7 Build homes, go right in, stay there, have families, plant gardens, seek peace and prosperity of Babylon, that wicked city that is filled with Idols. Pray for it, root for it not against it. Only makes sense if take in what the bible says about cities

**Up until the time of Jeremiah**, Israel thought that God was going to destroy Babylon and bring his heavenly city in.

Therefore we keep our heads down, retire to the bomb shelter and wait.

Then Jeremiah brings God's perspective. It isn't going to be like this. Instead go into Babylon and seek its peace.

**Jesus explains in Matthew 5**, "you are a city on a hill, let your light shine so that others will see your good deeds" You are a city, as a community living out of the life of Jesus, so let your light shine (not just ethics but practical acts, deeds of service) and praise your heavenly father.

**In other words, Jesus makes it clear that in every city there are two cities, both the city of man and the city of God...the church**

The people of God are an alternative city within a city...the church

**What does this city look like?**

The sermon on the mount describes what the heavenly city is like. The city of God are the people of God that make up an alternate city in which they take sex money and power and instead of using them as the earthly city does, exploitative and destructive, pride and oppression, instead, use sex money and power for the good of others (healthy marriages, families, parenting, generosity, community, leadership, servanthood etc)

**Don't work in city for your sake (assimilate), or your tribe's sake (tribalism) but for the city's sake**

The moment you become a Ctn you gain dual citizenship, of both earth and heaven

**What is going on? Lessons of Babylon:**

**a. See the place where you live as the place God has put you v4,7, 14**

- 3 times in passage God says I put you in Babylon. It wasn't your studies or your family or your job who brought you here.

**b. See the place where you live as where you will live until you die! V10**

- Emotionally for the Israelites it was, as you will live here until you die V10. In 70 years I am coming back...but I will be dead by then...yes so give now, here all you have. Give it all you have emotionally. Build, settle down, drill deep
- Yes God may speak again and move you on, but until then put down roots and invest, not for your own gain, but for others
- If you are living with mentality of "I am only here for a while" you will withdraw your heart and that is what Dublin needs, cos that is where the kingdom comes from

**c. See the city as a place to serve v7**

**Q. Are you living primarily where you live with the attitude of Jesus or the attitude of self**

- "I am going to get a degree and then I'm out of it." No I am here to serve the city
- "I am here for the high salaries and going to make my way" No God has plans and purpose for us, as the alternate city
- "Or tomorrow, when you hit the ugly stuff in the office, how do you respond, what is your motivation? Withdraw, try harder, fight back with like for like, or respond like Jesus

**d. See your city as a place that will bless you v7** God's default is to bless/sometimes with conditions

- Gal 6:7 sow and you will reap
- Jer 29 serve and you will be blessed and prosper

## **Third City Jonah 1: 1-3, 4: 10-11 The city of Nineveh**

How can we learn to love and serve our city?

**What is going on? Lessons of Nineveh:**

**1. Learn to hate things in a Godly way v2 "its wickedness has come up before me"** God loves the people but hates things that we do. Express your anger and hatred in Godly ways. This anger is meant to energise along side love.

**DOES NOT GIVE YOU RIGHT TO CHEW PEOPLE UP** (Eph 4:26)

**Story: Mother Teresa** was a geography teacher walked to school each day in Calcutta, came a day when she gave it up to do something about what she hated.

**Story: Martin Luther**, experienced racial oppression/drinking fountains, buses, restaurants, education

**Q. What do you hate in Dublin?**

**Allow Faith and love to mingle with Godly hatred to ignite your passion and mission**

- Jonah did not. He ran away
- What are you running away from, that you know is god stirring the heavenly city in you

**2. What is your vine (thing of comfort) that is preventing action in you?**

- Jonah, you are depressed cos something small compared to this great city, was taken from you.

**Q. What is like a vine shrivelling to you that is distracting you from being the city of God, compared to the 1.4 million of Dublin who don't know God, that is pathetic**

**Who is our motivation? Hebrews 13:12-14**

- **Jesus**, here he comes into Jerusalem, the city that represents the heavenly city
- **What happens?** He comes and serves and gets executed and exiled, thrown out of the city (you don't get killed in the city, it was symbolic of the banishment that sin deserves. That is what sin does to us, thrown out of the city of God,
- Here comes Jesus, suffering outside, so that he could make a way for them to come back in Heb 13
- **Jesus lost a city so that we could be citizens of a city that is already now here, and is increasingly coming in**
- **So that makes us salt and light**

**How? If you know who you are, if you have already settled the identity issue you have a self, you are filled with the love of God and you are not trying to settle that one, then you move out into the earthly city ready to give**

## **So what is God saying to Saoirse now?**

1. Fresh Bread for Ireland (2.5 yrs ago, Fresh bread, God calling some here/ then in July Julian
  - **Quote from Julian's word**
2. Search lights over the city, during October –Nov last year, praying
  - We are here to influence CITY and I believe the nation

**SO we want to increasingly Build to Jesus, He is the Bread of Life, and build to His mission,(be His city)**

## **Priorities:**

- Triplets
- Mission groups
- Developing leadership
- Venue. We need to find another
- Clarity on strategy for influencing the city

## **Questions:**

1. In what ways have you seen examples of the church being a city within the city of Dublin (or where you live) before (ie demonstrating an alternative way of living from heaven)? Have you even realised that this is what the local church is meant to be?
2. Can you think of ways that you are living Monday to Friday as if you believe that God has called you to Dublin (where you live) and ways that you are living for your own agenda (either assimilation or tribalism)?
3. What is it that you hate about Dublin (or the place where you live) that you now realise is something that God also hates and wants to change. How could you take steps to see such change?