SERMON NOTES Sunday 23rd January

sunnysidechurch

Bible passages: Nehemiah 8.1-10; Luke 4.14-21

Introduction

- Joy: a feeling of great happiness which touches the innermost parts of us
- Nehemiah: people reminded that trust in God and obedience will give them true safety, not walls
- Luke: Jesus reads words from Isaiah to claim that he is the anointed one and lay out his mission which involves preaching and action, belief and social change

Joy

1. Joy is found in God's presence

- Joy not depend on our circumstances but on our relationship with God
- 'In your presence is fullness of joy' (Psalm 16.11)

2. Joy is a fruit of the power of the Spirit at work in us

- Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit – same Spirit at work in us
- Joy is a fruit of the Spirit and can grow

3. We can experience this joy now

- 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing' (Luke 4.21)
- God at work now enabling those who believe in him to know the joy of being in his presence and restored as his people now - today

Conclusion

People respond in Nehemiah with praise, repentance, recommittal and joy. Mixed response to Jesus' sermon. How will we respond to invitation to experience joy in the Lord?

Some questions for discussion

1. Where do you see God at work?
2. Read Nehemiah 8.1-10. What do you notice?
3. Nehemiah stresses of understanding God's word. Why is this so important?
4. Read Luke 4.14-21. Can you think of examples from later in Luke's Gospel where we see what Jesus' programme looks like in practice?
5. Why is it important that Jesus' mission is about belief in him as well as social action?
6. Read Luke 4.22-30. How does these deepen your understanding of Jesus' mission?
7. The people responded in Nehemiah with praise, repentance, recommittal and joy. The response in Luke is mixed. How is God inviting you to respond?
8. What is God asking you to do as a result of what he has said to you through these passages? It might be something to pray about, something to think more about, something he wants you to talk to someone about or something he wants you to do. Make a note of it so you don't forget!

> 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' Romans 15.13

Why not spend some time thanking God for his joy and peace and ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to grow more of these fruits today?

Revd Rebecca Fardell