

Sunday 07 December 2008 morning Rev David Blandford

Living a Kingdom Life



"I'm baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I'm a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He's going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He'll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he'll put out with the trash to be burned." Matthew 3. 11-12 the Message

Advent that first coming of Jesus into God's world as the babe at Bethlehem. It truly was miraculous – there were angelic visitors, unplanned pregnancies, God given dreams, creation itself bore witness to the supernatural appearance of God incarnate – God as a human being!

As with all babies both John and Jesus grew up and around 30 years later we have one of their meetings recorded. As we consider the words exchanged we discover the importance and the way to live a Kingdom Life.

- **Identifying who you are living for.**

Advent or the run up to Christmas certainly reminds us that there are many things calling for that central place in our lives. In our western and largely secular society the place of Jesus within our mindset can mean that Jesus is either removed to the margins or not even considered.

Both John the Baptist were about living a Kingdom life for God. They call us to do the same. John's baptism provided the opportunity for people to re-centre God within their lives.

For this to happen there are a number of factors.

- i. The acknowledgment that our lives cannot run on empty – if God does not fill our lives we will look for something else to replace Him.
- ii. To recognize and desire that Jesus has that central place. This is not purely about belief but about a personal encounter and ongoing relationship. John the Baptist was keen for Jesus to have this place of prominence.
- iii. Having Jesus changing us from the inside. The spark of God's Spirit is able to ignite that change and is also able to consume that which will impede what God desires to do within us.

The spark of God's Spirit ignites the Kingdom life.

For Small Groups – Advent

- Share what advent means to you.
- Read Luke 1 – ask God to speak to you afresh as the Christmas event unfolds.
- Consider Mary – her reaction, to the heavenly visitor, and her response. Are there aspects of this encounter that we would like to embrace?
- Think of the angels promise in Luke 1.37 “Nothing is impossible for God!” – How are we to understand and apply this truth?
- John the Baptist and Jesus a powerful combination.

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These are dynamic words – explore the application of these words consider their implication for us.

Create the opportunity for prayer whether spoken or reflective – offer to God this advent and with it any hopes and fears that you may have.