



Kirknewton and East Calder Parish Church of Scotland

Scottish Charity No. SC006973

Readings Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13

Sermon: 6 September 2009

THE SPIRITUAL CYCLE AS THE CONSEQUENCE OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

Text: Mark 3:14 *“He (Jesus) appointed twelve –designating them to apostles-that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.”*

Life is a cycle-

- Planets travel around the sun
- There are twenty-four hours in a day
- Seven days in a week
- Fifty-two weeks in a year.

David describes this cycle of life beautifully in Ps. 19: 4-6 when he says: *“ In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at the one end of the heavens and makes it circuit to the other...”*

We also learn : *There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heaven: a time to be born and a time to die...a time to plant and a time to uproot (Ecclesiastes 3:1).*

Our spiritual life is a cycle as well. Understanding this spiritual cycle will help us understand : *Who we are? Where we are at this point in our faith What God has in for us in His Kingdom- in other words: our purpose in life.*

We have read that Jesus started His ministry *by appointed* twelve Apostles that they *might be with Him* and that *He might send* them out to preach....

The Greek word *apostolos* or *apostello* has the meaning of: *sent* or *one who is sent on a mission*. We can also say **an ambassador or a messenger**.

The Lord chose twelve *ambassadors or messengers* to witness Him before the world. He also gave them authority to drive out evil spirits , to heal the sick and to do miracles in His name (Matt.17:16).

They had for sure a tall order!

Jesus Himself had called His twelve messengers “Apostles” to indicate a distinctive relation with them. It also designates the office as instituted by Christ to witness of Him before the world. There is no continuity of the office of an apostle after their ministry with Jesus.

However, as followers of Jesus we are also His **messengers** in the world-- **Ambassadors** to witness the Lord before the world and to bring the Good News of His love for the world. It is the calling of the Church (followers) “to go, show and tell!”

From the live and ministry of Jesus` Apostles we uncover as followers and ambassadors our own” circle of spiritual life” as the gymnasium where we exercise the rhythm, the cycle and orderly pattern of our faith (spirituality) in order to fulfil our purpose in life and eternity.
Let us focus on the four steps of our spiritual exercise:

1 The first exercise: **SPENDING TIME WITH JESUS**

We have read in Mark. Chapter 3 “and *Jesus went up the mountain and called to Him those He himself wanted.* What happened after His calling?

“They **came** to him. Then He appointed twelve that **might be with Him** and that **He might send** them out...”

The first thing Jesus wanted from his disciples was their **TIME**.

The first thing Jesus wants from you is your **TIME!**

He is more concerned about **your walk** with him than **your work** for Him.

He would rather you **hang out** with Him than *burn out* for Him.

He is more interested in doing something **great in you** than you doing something great for Him.

Jesus asks our time:

Martha /Mary—the choice

As Jesus and His disciples were on their way back from Samaria, He brought a visit in to the home of Martha and Mary .They *opened their home* to Him and Martha immediately started with the preparations for lunch.

Mary on the other hand sat with Jesus enjoying His teachings and conversation.

Martha became so distracted by all the preparations that she went to Jesus started blaming Him: “Lord Don`t you care? I am working like a slave while my sister is sitting the whole day with You!

Tell her to help me!

Jesus said to her: Martha.....You are so concerned *working* for me. Like Mary, you must choose what is better.

The better choice is not working for Me, but... spending TIME with Me!

All work, also our work in ministry will end, but *time with Me will not be taken away!*

Heaven/eternity= spending time with God.

We could be so busy with the things of the Lord that we forget the Lord of the things.

When was the last time you spent *time with Jesus* ---

*in the Scriptures, studying His Word

*on your knees seeking His presence

*singing praise songs in the bathroom or in your car?

You will never be disappointed by making the right choice: time with Jesus.

David , a very busy king and family man seeked time with God early in the morning. He says in PS 5:4

*“In the morning, o Lord
You hear my voice;
In the morning I lay my requests
before you...
And wait in expectation”*

2 The Second exercise: Learning Through EXPERIENCE

As messengers or ambassadors there is work to do in the Kingdom of God. However, even though Jesus chose His followers in Chapter 3, He doesn't send them out until Chapter 6

Many things happened between Chapters 3 and 6 and the apostles were with Jesus every step of the way. In chapters 3 to 6: JESUS

- Encounters Beelzebub...
- teaching parables,
- calms the storm
- heals the demon possessed man,
- raises a young girl from the dead,
- heals many sick people and
- is rejected by his own hometown.

These experiences were **invaluable** to the disciples when they were sent out to do ministry on their own. Many things to them were all fresh ground and they could not always understand “the story behind the story”

Why? How? What?

We do not understand the *circle of live*. In many cases, we have no idea why things, good or bad, are happening to us.

All that we know and believe in our journeys through live is that the Lord is teaching us something ...and that we have to learn from every situation and event in our lives.

We are in the Divinity School of GOD and in a learning process.

What is He trying to teach you?

- Perhaps you are going through tough times at this moment and you see no light in the tunnel.
- It could be that you feel that you have come to the end of the road..a cull de sac. No hope, future or happiness.

Just remember that even tough times are part of the learning curve in life and that GOD uses it to teach you incredible truths.

Now we know in part, but at the end of live we shall see fully.

Prayer-John Hopps (1877)

*“Father ,lead me day by day
Ever in Thine own sweet wa;y
Teach me to be pure and true;
Show me what I ought to do!”*

3 ON THE JOB FOR JESUS!

After *spending valuable* time with Jesus and experienced lessons had been learned, Jesus **sent them out** to be on the job for the Kingdom of God. They have to put into practice what they had learned and experienced.

He gave them authority to do everything He had been doing. Thinking of it: *everything Jesus had done!*

He commanded them not to make any provision for the journey: no money, no bag, no bread. Only a staff. *The Lord will provide and care for them.*

As ambassadors for Jesus we have to put our trust in the Lord. He will provide in all our needs.

What are you doing for the Kingdom of God?

What does Jesus want you to do for Him?

It is not by accident that you are where you are, doing what you are doing, experiencing what you are experiencing in life.

As the Church and disciples of Jesus, we all have a task. We all have to work in God`s Kingdom. We all have a purpose in life.

And what is our purpose?

We are here to glorify God...to praise His NAME and give honour To Him as our almighty living God and heavenly Father.

We do it by *worshipping Him* but also *working* for Him.

In order to fulfil your call in the world, He wants you to use all your experiences and all your gifts and talents to serve others and have mercy for those in need.

He wants you to **GO** and **Tell** the world that *“...God so loved the world that He gave His One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not be perish, but have eternal live” (John 3:16)*

Are you ready to take up your (task) calling in His New World (Kingdom)?

Are you willing to be a blessing to others to the honour of his name?

4 Back to step 1: SPENDING TIME WITH JESUS

The Cycle of discipleship starts all over again!

We read (6:30): *“Then the apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all they had done and taught”*

At the end of the day, after a long and busy programme the disciples gathered around Jesus and gave feedback of a hard day`s work. They reported to Him the positive and negative things; the successes but also the disappointments.

The Kingdom of God is always a conflict between light and darkness. It is about joyous and gladness, disappointments and sadness.

We know that Jesus after a busy schedule always prayed to his Father in heaven: *telling God, thank God and praise God.*

What a wonderful opportunity we have to be invited by the Lord at the end of each day to gathering around Him telling our stories-stories of blessings, disappointments, victories, our sins, fear ...our love for God...

How privileged we are to have a friend in Jesus. That we have not to be *anxious about everything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, may present our requests to God, knowing that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ (.Phil.4;6)*

Conclusion

In order to fulfil you are calling and to be effective as followers of Jesus in the world today, you have to submit yourself to this cycle systematically.

The question is:

Where are you in this cycle of now?

Where do you need to be?

Remember: Efficiency is doing things right; effectiveness is doing the right things.

If you are not sure where you are as ambassador and follower of Jesus in this circle, the best place to start is by spending time with Jesus.

Amen

Readings for the week : Matthew 10:5-15

Jesus included everyone in his mission, even the sick. Sickness was commonly seen as a punishment of a sin that was committed. Sick people was regarded as spiritually unclean and not allowed to enter the temple. Jesus includes them in his kingdom. His message is for everyone that is willing to have faith in him. We do not have to be rich to be a witness of Christ glory. We do not have to be clever or articulate to confess to our world that Jesus is the only Saviour of humanity. We do not require any extra clothing to bear witness to Jesus' presence in everyday living. We do not have to be gifted to confess that Jesus came to save the faithful from death, hell and sin. We do not have to be healthy to help others who are sick and in need of God's loving care. We do not need money to convince others that we belong to Christ. No Jesus says to us too: Just go as you are? Why? We have to be dependant from God our Father. He will help and provide us with the necessities that we require God will - through his Holy Spirit — guide us to be witnesses of his glorious Name. We must trust him to know that He will equip us with everything we need to be witnesses of Christ's mercy and love. We must not allow our world to dictate to us what we must say with regard to our Christian faith. It is God who calls us to go out and spread the good news (see Matthew 10:5). We can never stop being witnesses despite the hostility of our world, our villages and the people around us.

Prayer

Lord, give me wisdom.

Help me to choose knowledge

and the fear of the Lord.

Amen