**Sunday 10th July 2016 Message**

**Living in the Future Present – A prophetic lifestyle**

**Scripture : Isaiah 61:1-7**

**Introduction**

We are called to live a prophetic lifestyle for the world to see that Jesus in us brings the future promises of God into the present. I attribute much of today’s message to Graham Cooke whose books on the prophetic I have read for many years, and whose teachings have always inspired me. But it is not head knowledge that transforms us, it is experience. Faith in His word, written and spoken, is the first step in a journey that leads to experience. God does not want us to remain in a place of faith in a lot of head knowledge, He wants us to know by experience and then faith is no longer faith but reality.

If you were to be in discussion with any pre Christian who told you they know the Bible inside out you are likely to say “That’s great, but that does not make you a Christian, you need to experience the Truth (Jesus), and know beyond doubt that you have a relationship with Him”

We should not say “I believe Jesus is Lord”, but be able to say with conviction, “I KNOW Jesus is Lord”. How do you know, because you have seen His power overcome impossible situations in your life. It is too late to enter into a spiritual battle and be wondering whether Jesus is Lord. You have to know He is Lord and no matter the situation or circumstance be certain that it will turn out for good, in order to be able to remain standing throughout the battle.

Likewise, we should not say “I believe Jesus enables me to heal the sick” but “I KNOW I can heal the sick”. We should be able to say “I KNOW Jesus can provide for your every need”, “I KNOW that Jesus will provide.”, “I KNOW Jesus can deliver you from bondage”, “I KNOW I can do all that the Bible tells me I can do.” Confidence to say such things is a move on from faith, but as Michaela rightly preached last week we start with knowing His Word, declaring His Word, believing His Word.

**Not present past**

It is illegitimate, illegal for a believer to declare that they cannot do something that Jesus says they can, because of something in their past which they keep bringing into the present. Many have suffered abuse, rejection and torment from family and friends in the past, and it mars their thinking, thought processes and heart in the present and it is tragic. God is not present past, He does not look at your past and say you are stuck in behaviours because of your past, He looks at who you are in Christ now, and who you are going to be in the future. God has dealt with all your past through Jesus’ death and resurrection on the cross, once and for all. He no longer looks at your past because He cannot see it.

If we are stuck with behaviours we attribute to our past we are denying the work of the cross. It is possible that we have not forgiven those who have hurt us, that we still hate all that has happened to us and the people who have hurt us, and that we are unwilling to let go (forgive) and receive what Jesus has done.

Jesus was abused, rejected, tormented and murdered, forgave everyone, and overcame everything through a resurrection life. You can do the same. If you have suffered and you left your past behind covered in the blood of Jesus, then you are well prepared to withstand anything you may suffer for the sake of Jesus Christ.

**Slide *- Hebrews 7:27 He has no day by day necessity, as [do each of these other] high priests, to offer sacrifice first of all for his own [personal] sins and then for those of the people, because He [met all the requirements] once for all when He brought Himself [as a sacrifice] which He offered up. AMP***

***Heb 10:14 For by a single offering He has forever completely cleansed and perfected those who are consecrated and made holy. AMP* Slide - Video**

So let me ask you do you KNOW your past, present and future sins are dealt with once and for all?

Do you KNOW your past no longer determines how you behave as far as God is concerned?

What God is focussed on in you life, is not your past, it is about taking you on the journey into your future. He is not obsessed with your sin habits, He is determined and focussed on leading you into righteousness.

***1 Corinthians 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. NIV***

Why does not God see the wrong things in us? Because He is not schizophrenic, He has place us in Jesus and that’s what He sees. He does not see what is wrong with you. He sees what is missing in your experience of Him and He is deeply committed to filling that gap. That is why Jesus intercedes for us in heaven, He stands in the gap, asking the Father to fill in the missing pieces.

**Slide - *Hebrews 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. NIV***

Simply put every issue in our lives is down to the identity we choose to believe past or future What do you believe?

**As God sees so should we.**

The challenge for us is to see people the way God sees them, that is with a prophetic mindset first seeking future present, and with a pastoral mindset that helps people to enter their future rather than solely a program focussed on their past.

Focussing on past and present unacceptable behaviour will bring condemnation, focussing on their identity in Christ should bring hope.

The antidote to a person’’s past is not sorting out their present, but pointing to their future and bringing their future into the present.

**Testimony from Graham Cooke** – a man seeking a word from God about his doctor’s diagnosis that he only had four months to live due to cancer comes to a conference that Graham is speaking at. Graham prophecies over him about the next ten years of the man’s life on the mission field and the places he will go too to serve the Lord. The man gets annoyed and verbal about the prophecy saying that is not what he wanted to \*\*\*\* hear, he wanted a word about his cancer. To cut a long story short the man eventually twigs that God did not see the cancer, He saw his future. He goes to bible college to be trained as a missionary after four months he suddenly realises he is past his doctors live by date. Fifteen years later he is still on the mission field fulfilling what God saw his future as.

How often have you rejected a prophetic word because he did not match your present circumstances? Or just did not want to hear what God was saying to you because you were wallowing in the present? This is not just true about prophetic words, so often we do it with scripture and the word God speaks to our inner man. We know what God is saying, has said, and subconsciously we are denying it because of the present.

How can we have joyful glistening expectation of Gods goodness towards us (hope), when we are focussed on what is happening and strengthen that by our past experiences and the past experiences of others?

Your future is determined and you need to be expectant of stepping into it. God has a plan, and to that end He is in control, no matter what you do or have done, or what other people do to you, He can work together for good to bring about what He has determined for your life. He is the master chess champion, while we stress and carefully plan the moves in our life, He comes along without hesitation to counter every move and win the game. This is the hope I have, and see in the Word. When Israel rejected Samuel and being part of a theocracy (led by Gods word through the prophets), God did not stress and let the people have what they wanted a king, even though He explained through Samuel the dangers that would bring. Look at their history through the book of Kings, good kings, bad kings, oppressive idolaters offering child sacrifice kings, to the likes of David. A nation without land of their own and suffering unthinkable and unexplainable in the holocaust, a nation reborn. I do not understand how God can counter every evil desire of men, without looking at the cross.

Accountability in the church should be focussed on calling people into their future, encouraging alternative behaviour to help them become what God wants them to be. This is different from restraining a person from their bad behaviour which can be necessary when there is persistent resistance to repentance from who they used to be and turn to who they are meant to be.

***1 Corinthians 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. NIV***

**Isaiah 61 – Slide Read**

Our key passage of scripture for this morning has one key word in it that explains the mission of Jesus and those who are filled with the Spirit and are Gods co-workers.

God uses the word INSTEAD. God has declared that whatever negative thing you had or have in your life, He is going to give you something better and different INSTEAD.

You have beauty instead of ashes

You are joyful not mourning

You are oaks of rigtheousbess

You are priests of the Lord – that does not carry a demeanour of rejected, abused, angry, crippled with stress, anxiety and poverty

You will feed on the riches of nations

You have a double portion – not shame

You have an inheritance – not disgrace

The Holy Spirit equips and trains us in expectancy for the goodness of God to be released too us. Expectancy is not passive, you have to look for it, prepare for it, wait for it, give birth to it. Birthing in the natural requires you to groan, strain, suffer pain, position yourself, and effort to see the gift of life. What you see in the natural is a pointer to the spiritual.

Holy Spirit empowers is to stand firm in the expectancy of the favour that God has declared is coming our way no matter what the circumstances.

The passage talks about the vengeance of God being released as He bestows favour on His people. How does revenge look to you in your situation? Do you want to see your enemy overpowered? Satan takes a lot of blows when Gods people walk into the favour He has promised, everything he thought he had victory in is destroyed and you get to partner with God in taking revenge on the enemy. This is true spiritual warfare, bringing the future into the present.

God intends to turn every battle in your life into victory because it will position you to not just believe but to KNOW and have the power to minister the same victory to those around you. Your testimony will have power. So rather than wallow in a struggle you may be having rejoice in expectancy that God is going to take revenge on the enemy and position you in power to minister defeat to the enemy in that area in other peoples lives.

**Isaiah 54 – Slide**

No weapon formed against you shall prosper. I want you to be encouraged this morning that no matter what the enemy has planned to do to try and thwart Gods purposes, God is still working on bringing your future into the present.

If anyone has cursed you, rejoice. Write down the curse and work out what the promise is that God is going to use to take revenge on the enemy. ***This [peace, righteousness, security, triumph over opposition] is the heritage of the servants of the Lord*** Everything that the enemy and his agents throw at you will bring peace, righteousness, security and triumph. It is your heritage hallelujah.

It would certainly puzzle any Satanist who tried to curse you if you turned to them and say “Bring it on, let me write it down, I am going to benefit from this because my Father has promised.” Possibly not our usual response, but who is greater our God or theirs?

Let me ask a thought provoking (rather than a show of hands) question. What if every problem has a promise attached to it? What if you cannot have a problem without a promise? You know you cannot grow in faith without encountering problems, so we have to stand on the promise and not the problem. Every problem has its own promise and provision as an answer, this is the time to knock and seek.

Your circumstances is not the problem, your perception of it is.

If the problem Is that big, how big is the provision going to be. God has to respond in abundance not in measure, that is His nature and His promise. Perhaps you should be disappointed if you have not got a problem? Your problem is a doorway of opportunity.

**Concluding Comments**

So we are called to live a prophetic lifestyle – one that is revealing the promises of God.

We each have an opportunity to reveal the glory of God in us, but that is a present future lifestyle not a present past lifestyle. We are all on a journey of faith from believing to knowing, and as is said so often with God there is always more to be entered into than we have experienced so far.