

CELL NOTES 22/3/10

ICE BREAKER

Have you ever been embarrassed by mistaking a stranger for an acquaintance? What happened?

THEME

I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary.

Reading John 1 : 29 - 34

SERMON OUTLINE

- 1) John the Baptist's mission statement is in John 1 : 7 – where the word “believe” is far more about our heart relationship, and attitude of trust, than mental assent to ideas.
- 2) What can we know historically about Jesus? He is referred to by 2 extra-Biblical sources in particular (Tacitus and Josephus) and dated fairly explicitly in history by the references to Pontius Pilate.
- 3) What do we make of the virgin birth? Matthew and Luke both refer to that, and scholars believe they knew of it from different sources. Clearly, if Jesus really was who He later claimed to be, any other origin would cast doubt on Him.
- 4) His names are all significant
 - Jesus (cf Hebrew Joshua) = “God is my salvation”, or “Saviour”
 - Christ (cf Hebrew Messiah) = “God's anointed one.” Jesus explicitly accepted this in Mark 14 : 61 – 62.
 - Son of God - a term frequently used in the early church (e.g. Acts 9 ; 20), and declared audibly by the Father at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration.
 - Why did Jesus attract such hatred from Jewish leaders? – because of His explicit and implicit claim to have a unique relationship with the Father.
- 5) “Our Lord” – a very emotive term in the first century, when Roman emperors insisted on being so called – hence Rom 10 : 9 would be a real challenge. This term is best expressed in Phil 2 : 9 – 11.
- 6) My challenge is, “Do I really believe and live by what I give mental and verbal assent to?” Stories of Nigerian pastors beheaded and Iraqi converts killed – for such men and women Jesus was undeniably their Lord. It puts our recent local controversy into perspective!!
- 7) Is Jesus one amongst various competing influences, loyalties and voices in my life or is He really pre-eminent and superior?
- 8) Do I help you to live like that and do you help me? - messages of support and encouragement in the last week have been particularly valuable to Sally and me in doing just that!

QUESTIONS OF APPLICATION

- 1) Read John vv 29 – 42. What different titles for Jesus are used in these verses? Which means most to you, and why?
- 2) How would you respond to somebody who was very sceptical of the virgin birth?
- 3) Read the Philippians passage. What does it mean to you to say “Jesus is Lord”? What other influences are at work in your life to weaken this?
- 4) How may you encourage others to live with Jesus as their Lord?