

Worship vision talk 1 - 2nd September 2012

God has called us to a new season of worship. Four years ago he showed me that this was going to be a year of worship. In the last few months the call has been confirmed by people being sent to us who love worship or who have led worship. People who are musicians, singers and worshippers. God is equipping us to obey the call for this season. We have placed a firm foundation over the years as faithful people have led us in worship and continued to grow in worship leading and listening to the Spirit. God has been blessing us through our worship for a while but God wants an increase of anointing and a release beyond anything we have known before.

But why is God calling us to a season of worship?

There are 3 reasons that I'm going to talk about today:-

God wants to:-

1. restore
2. refresh
3. release

2 Samuel 11 v1

'In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.'

If I asked: which character in scripture was the greatest worshipper? - then most of us would say David – the writer of the Psalms, the one who descended from the tribe of Judah – the tribe of praise, the one who danced before the Lord with all his might, the one who it was said of him that he strengthened himself in the Lord when everyone else was turning against him, the one who had conquered tens of thousands.

Yet here in 2 Samuel 11 we see David napping.

When kings should be out fighting, when his armies were battling and the people of God are under threat David was napping on his couch (or in the NIV it says he was on his bed). Just as Eve was in the wrong place standing next to the tree that God had said 'don't eat from that tree' so David was where he should never have been.

Here in this passage from 2 Samuel 11 we see a prophetic picture of the church, a church that God is sending out at the beginning of all new things, in the springtime of a new kingdom, battling for the purposes of God and the question is – in a time of war are we as the church of God napping? When the cause of Christ needs me to be fighting am I apathetic and asleep in my bed? Am I befriending the enemy and living in ways that are foreign to God when others are in need of my help and desperate for me to show a resolve of faith?

Genesis 13 – Abram returns to the first altar he had built to God at Bethel, the place of his first love and he calls upon the name of the Lord and in v14 God says to him “Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are”

God wants to restore us – not to comfort or to peace but to the place we should be. He is calling us to a place of battle, to take up the fight. He is calling us to the place of war where we are contending for the kingdom of God against anything that would stand against it.

Worship restores our priorities and enthrones Jesus in our lives again.

David was napping and then he sees a beautiful woman called Bathsheba – peering at her bathing. So he commits adultery, gets found out because Bathsheba becomes pregnant,

so he tries to cover it up with deception and then when that doesn't work he murders his way out of trouble.

At this point David is looking less like a worshipper and more like someone we wouldn't feel safe with. When we are unguarded and in the wrong place we become something God never intended us to be – where we are affects who we are – are we in that place of worship or are we napping on the couch or standing by the tree?

It takes a prophetic word for David to realise his sin and then we see Psalm 51 v4 **'Against you, you only, have I sinned v12 'restore me to the joy of your salvation v17 the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart...'**

We are moving into a time of the Spirit moving, why? to restore Jesus as our Master and Commander – the church in this country used to send missionaries out to witness to the gospel and now we are a mission field where apathy and cynicism have taken over. As individuals and as a nation we have lived less like Jesus is our Master and Commander and we've lived more like Mutiny on the Bounty when we've had so much and thrown it away for the sake of comfort and appearing to be cool (as Adrienne said the other week).

This year God is giving us an opportunity. We are being called into a season of restoring in our community, in each other, & in ourselves Jesus as Master and Commander. To restore Him as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, as Healer and sovereign leader. We are being called to the place of war where we will fight for the King and gather under the banner of Christ.

I see so many churches, former places of worship that have been turned into climbing walls, leisure centres and comfy homes – has that happened to us? Have the places of worship become less like battle grounds where the kingdom of God is being fought for in the heavenly realms and become instead more like places of comfort and leisure?

Lets turn our comfortable homes and our climbing walls and centres of leisure into churches – into places of worship where wars are fought and He is Master and Commander once more.

As we gather to worship He is restored in our hearts to the place He must always be if we are to take the land for Him. No matter who other people declare to be king, we say Christ is.

In our families, in our homes, in our work places, in our finances, in our careers, in our relationships, in our marriages, in our attitudes and our character. He is Lord and we fight for Him and we fight beside Him.

We have had the word brought to us 2 months ago from Revelation 2 v4 **'You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.'**

2ndly:-

And when we have restored Christ as Master and commander and our worship in the battle is being fought we will find refreshing.

Later in Psalm 51 we see the second reason God is calling us to a season of Worship v8 **'Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit with me.'**

God is calling us to a season of refreshing – even in the midst of battle.

Deep refreshing comes when we spend time focused on Him – in the place of worship. So

often we think that refreshing is to do with getting what we want or think we need – a holiday, food, money, a job, a husband or wife – all these things are good and are blessings but they do not bring refreshing – only God Himself can truly satisfy our deepest longings.

John 4 v14 (when Jesus meets the woman of Samaria) **“Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

John 6 v35 (speaking to the disciples after He had fed the 5000) **“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”**

John 11 v25 (speaking to Martha after her brother Lazarus had died and was buried & had been in the tomb for 4 days) **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live...”**

There is refreshing found when we come close to Jesus – our thirst quenched, our hunger satisfied, our lives restored.

I can remember as a child visiting my grandad and he had a huge garden – he was a keen gardener – and we would sit together with my sister in the garden with a bowl full of peas that we had just picked from the garden – we would pop the pods and taste the peas: they were the sweetest, nicest, most delicious peas I have ever tasted or will ever taste. Are we eating last week's fruit when we could be tasting something fresh from today's crops, from this morning's harvest – found in the place of worship?

People recognise the difference between a fresh faith and a stale faith. They can tell when we are living on yesterday's blessings rather than today's.

Psalms 40 v3 says:-

'He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in God.'

As we enter this new season of worship God will refresh us in our spirits so that we spill over with the freshness of God to those around us and 'many will see...and put their trust in the Lord.'

Nehemiah 8 v10 “do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength”

And finally we are led to the 3rd reason why God is calling us into this season of worship. God wants, out of the closeness of our walk with Him, out of the place of worship, for us to be released into our calling and ministry for Him.

Going back to the words of sinful David in Psalm 51 we see him saying:-
having pleaded with God to restore to him the joy of salvation he says

v13 **I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you....**

v14 **my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness O Lord open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise**

David could have dwelt in his failure but instead he worshipped God and out of his worship he stepped into a restored, refreshed and renewed future.

Like David we need to stop dwelling in our history as individuals and as a church. Our history can limit us but God wants to talk to us about our destiny. We have to stop

being captive to our history and bound up by our history but we need to step out of our history into God's destiny so we can leave a legacy that cannot be touched by the enemy.

We can be bound by our past mistakes and failures and it limits what God can do in us because we limit ourselves and imprison ourselves to what has happened before and the times we messed up and our esteem is affected and we think we will inevitably plough the path we have always ploughed but God wants to release us into our destiny so we can leave a legacy that cannot be touched by the enemy.

I have mistakes, things I regret, things I've got wrong – we haven't got time for me to list them all here now and some of them are too shameful to admit in the front of a crowd this large but my close friends know about them and yet when I come into the place of worship the words I hear are 'Mike I love you' – and it releases me to become more than I thought I could be because I judged myself on my history and God calls me according to my destiny.

We can be bound by our our past successes and the ways in which we have been victorious and we become stuck in ways of doing things that worked 5, 10, 15 or 20 years ago but God has fresh manna for today – He wants to do a new thing and we are trapped by things that we think will work now because they worked way back then.

God wants to do a new thing which He will reveal in the place of worship so we are released from our history into our destiny so we can live out a legacy that scares the life out of the enemy.

We can imprison other people by their histories because of the hurts they caused and the sins they committed and the ways they've been and so we limit them to their history and judge them according to their history but the glory of the Gospel is that Jesus wants to take the sinful Zaccheus's of this world and turn them into generous saints of God who are no longer trapped by their histories but who step into their God given destinies so they can leave a kingdom legacy that destroys the work of the enemy.

When you hear 'history' condemn it, when you hear 'destiny' speaking embrace it

Worship releases us from our past because it brings a new perspective of who we are and of what God has in store for us – it focuses our eyes on heaven and we get in touch with the heart of God and the compassion of God and the love of God and His presence leads us into a new way of seeing and a new way of living out our faith.

Genesis 13 v14 (again) “lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are”

– away from your history and into destiny

BUT also

- FROM the place of worship see the vision I have for you – God wants, out of the place & our times of worship, to reveal the vision He wants to release us into so we can arise and walk into everything He wants to give us and do in and through us.

When He is our Master and Commander and we are in the place of listening to Him and He says 'chart a new course' 'set sails for a new destination' then we obey because we have heard Him in the place of worship.

This year we will commit to an increase in our worship together in each others' homes, in our families, in the Boiler Room as part of our prayer times and seeking Him.

This year we will see prophetic voice released as we get closer to His heart and His voice.

This year we will carry the presence of God into our lives so that when we step through the doors of our work places, of our homes, of the meeting places and into the streets then

others will see and many will trust in the Lord.

This is a destiny year – when we stop living in our past and step into all that God has for us because we acknowledge Him as Master and Commander.

This year we will return to the place of war where the kingdom of God violently breaks out against the enemy and as we dwell in His word, as we pray, as we give thanks, as we honour Him then His kingdom is established in our lives, in our church & in our community.

Colossians 1 v17 '**He is before all things and in Him all things hold together**'

Who wants to be restored?

Who wants to be refreshed?

Who want to be released?