

Sermon Notes from 10 am service 24 January 2010

Nehemiah 8 v 1-3,5-6,8-10

Luke 4 v 14 -21

What is your mission?

When the most important day of your life happens you do not always know that do you? There are days of course which you think will be the most important day- the day you start school, or the day you get married but there are other days that you look back on and realise that you were at something totally extraordinary and you did not know –then. Looking back you can see clearly but not at the time. I do not remember who else was there. I do not remember the weather. What I had had for breakfast. What I did with the rest of the day even. So it was as I look back on that day. Was it the start? Or one of the markers on the road? OK was it the start for him? Well later I heard that amazing things happened at his baptism. Was that the start or when he went away for all that time, the desert I heard, was that the start? Who knows this was the start of something. Maybe the start of him having enough of Nazareth- and who can blame him. It's always tough being seen as yourself as an adult in the place you grew up.

You know I always thought he was odd. Not strange but different. Not like the rest of us. Sat next to my brother in school. Pleasant enough bloke but not always the easiest one to know. He was just around growing up like us –or not like us actually. Nazareth as I said not exactly the best place. I can't wait to leave. He left too. All sorts of things we began to hear about him. I thought it was nonsense. Jesus – I said so- God descending like a dove, a voice from heaven, you must be joking. How could that be true of somebody that you know their sister?

So Sabbath day and amazingly along comes Jesus. Like all the rest of us he was regular in worship. And the leaders of our community recognised that he had a preaching ministry now. They gave the honour of reading the scroll to us. He read from Isaiah, so far so ordinary and then it went quiet. What was he going to preach to us? What was he going to say? He handed the scroll back and said today in your hearing the scripture is fulfilled.

Wow. Then of course there was a right barny with people saying –how can that be -he is Joseph's son. And Jesus saying that he was without

honour among us because this was his home town. Bit of a cheek but typical because it is true.

Anyway I'll leave all that it was what he said had come true that interested me. Isaiah says- God has anointed him to preach good news to the poor, freedom for those in prison and sight for the blind and to say that this is the year of the Lord's favour. What does that mean?

Well it is certainly good news and it is especially good news for those who have the hardest time. Something is going to change he says. The weakest and most likely to be on the scrap heap are the closest to God's heart he says.

I wonder how he is going to do anything about that? I mean he is a good speaker and I think he is a good man but can one man make such a difference. And what does today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing mean? Satisfied complete. No more waiting. I am the one he shouts- in his quiet reasonable voice.

Well whatever he meant he certainly did not mean that all those people who had done wrong things should be let out of prison. Take well that idiot Barabbas for example- nobody would want him out of prison. Yes I know the Romans can be dreadful but you don't go about irritating them by rebellion do you. No Barabbas is just the sort of person we all want to stay locked away.

But it means something about things being better. And these are examples of that. So once we could not see now we can- better. Once we were locked away now we are free better. And there are loads of others we could use...hungry full, thirsty –satisfied. Trapped in rubble now free.

And I have often wondered since whether the ideas and role were for him or whether he thought they were for all of us. Or even if not that role then some role for all of us. Like some idea in how we should live our lives. That he was the one who painted the biggest picture and we all had our part of the colouring in to do. Our part of it being important. He made me feel not as big or important as him but that my little bit was important. And let's be clear there is no littler place than Nazareth-well that what I think.

