

Sermon Notes from 10 am service 7 March 2010

Isaiah 55 v 1-9

Luke 13 v 6-9

The message of these two passages is that we need to be careful in what we invest because although God is generous with us God does expect that we will be fruitful. Invest- well our time and our abilities and our money. We are as a church community in the process of looking at our individual giving and we will all be challenged with that in the next few weeks but the message of these passages is that what matters to God is to be fruitful and to know that we have to reflect on how we invest ourselves.

All money belongs to God so I am not saying the way to tell what matters to a person is how much money they give to Kingston United Reformed Church. All the money that you have God has given it to you. All of it. There is not little stash that is your pocket- not God money. The money you use for food, heating, your transport, your accommodation, your film watching, your book reading. All of it. As all of life is God's not just some days –all of our time is God's. How are you using your time?

The Israelites invited to glimpse an exciting future. God will be at work in Cyrus the Persian. He will lead the people home. As they repent and turn to God they will find a satisfaction which all their petty attitudes deprive them of leaving them hopeless. But now they will see God at work through this foreigner Cyrus. This notion of victimhood, with your country being overrun is also there in the New Testament. In this case of course the oppressors are the Romans Jesus message is of repentance and fruit- bearing by all. The fruit tree that does not produce should reasonably be pruned and discarded. But the gardener

is persuaded to be generous and leave it-give it another chance.

Of course the thing about a fruit tree is that it produces fruit which is a gift for others. So God who is more generous than we deserve and then we in our turn are to be more generous than others deserve. Would it not be great if we as a church had a reputation in the community of being a generous people.- hospitable and welcoming. Luke- God who is generous more than we would deserve- not merely just but generous. Generosity is more than we could reasonably expect. Generosity is to be one of the markers of the Christian community. As God has given to us so are we to give to others - time to those that the rest of society would reject, money to those who are vulnerable, political energy on behalf of those that the rest of society would reject.

Question- Are you using the resources that you have as effective as you can? When was the last time you looked at your life and noticed how you were spending your time and money? That is not only what you were doing but what you were thinking/ worrying about too- what are you giving your head space to.