

## Messages for St Andrew's in 2012

### Main points from Ron's sermon on 22 January

Three key words of vision:

- **Restoration**
- **Relationships**
- **Revelation**

### Joshua 14: 6-15: What is Caleb saying?

- I'm aging but I'm still able
- I still have strength to do God's will
- I'm vigorous (= enthusiastic, determined )
- With God's help, I will take possession of this mountain!

### What "mountains" do we want to possess?

- Renewed enthusiasm – we must fight apathy
- More 30- and 40-year-olds – we must fight irrelevance
- More children and young people – we must fight a lack of energy
- A thriving Community Centre – we must fight resistance to change

### To impact this city:

- Will we join Caleb in saying "Give me this mountain!"
- Will we rise up in faith and prayer?
- Will we be willing to change and grow?
- Will we yet again contribute financially?

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

## Main points from Ron's sermon on 5 February

### **Stirred to Action** (Based on Haggai 1:1-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

Haggai was among the Jewish exiles who had returned from Babylon.

There is a hint (2:3) that he may have witnessed the destruction of Solomon's majestic temple – if that's true, then Haggai would at least be in his 70's ... age is no limitation for God.

The returning exiles had begun a restoration project and by 536BC had completed the foundations of the temple ... but then they got discouraged! Opposition from the neighbours caused the work to stop for 16 years. According to the NIV Study Bible, "The Jews were more to blame for their inactivity than their opponents ..." It was Haggai's job, as God's spokesperson, to arouse them from their lethargy – the words he used were read this morning.

### **Let's explore them briefly:**

- People have excuses (v.2)
- The Lord had a challenge (v. 3-4)
- The Lord asked them to ponder (v. 5,7) – "Give careful thought to your ways."
- The Lord calls for a re-focusing by assuring them of His presence (v.13) and stirring them to action (v.14)

**But that was 520 BC!**

## How does it apply to St Andrew's in 2012?

### Let me apply two things:

- It's easy to become discouraged
  - Opposition – external and internal
  - Diminishing numbers
  - Aging congregation
  - Too much effort required
  - It's easier to become self-absorbed

### Concentrating on the negatives can be very dis-spiriting; hence my constant refrain "Attitude of gratitude" 😊

- It's a call to re-focus – to join in the re-building, the restoration that God is doing now ... in 2012! To focus on what is a priority to God. Jesus is about building his church ... not the physical buildings (although this grand old church and The Link are wonderful facilities), but Jesus is building people into his church. And God wants us to realise that we, all of us, have a part to play.

At the special Congregational Meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, I was both humbled and thrilled by what I witnessed – people rising up to say, "We can do this. We will not let St Andrew's die a financial death! We will take action. We will seek God's wisdom and provision. We will respond to the prompting of God's Spirit."

And as we do, God will work miracles in and through us.

At that meeting Douglas presented a sobering financial paper that now predicts a significant deficit by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Wouldn't it be amazing if we witnessed God at work in and through us all so that by June 30<sup>th</sup> we reach a break-even point? Wouldn't it be wonderful to have such a response to a 'Giving Review' that we enter the new budget year of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013 with a balanced budget?

Haggai stirred the people to action as God's Spirit spoke through him. At the Congregational Meeting I sensed God stirring people to action.

Perhaps the old saying applies:

"Pray as if it all depends on God. Then work as if it all depends on us."

2012 is shaping up to be an exciting, challenging journey. God has not finished with St Andrew's. God's heart is to restore ... may God speak afresh to us through his ancient prophets ... may God stir us to the appropriate action that we should take both individually and collectively.

**Let us pray!**