

- How would you sum up Jesus response to the Pharisees in vs 14-23? Why do you think Jesus responds like this in the context of the conversation?
- Bearing in mind this discussion which Jesus had with the Pharisees, what is significant about the episode which Mark records next in vs 24-30? Try to remember where Jesus was and to whom he was specifically relating?
- What lessons do you think Jesus wants us to learn from these episodes?

#### WORSHIPPING.



Spend some time praising Jesus for how he has gone 'beyond the boundaries' in order to draw people into God's Kingdom. Perhaps you want to use Philippians 2: 5-11 to reflect on how Jesus has crossed the ultimate boundary in order to bring us to God.

ENGAGING. As outlined last Wednesday and on Sunday past, there are various opportunities to get involved in 'leaving the building.'



- § Home visitation team with 'Word on the Street' newsletter, or simply visiting people who request a visit from us.
- § 'Street-serve' Team carrying out small, practical tasks for people in our parish area who are unable to manage these themselves: e.g. cleaning pathways, gardens, painting fences, washing downstairs windows, other small jobs at our discretion...
- § Games Team working with young people and children on 'the green' in Dunclug
- § Prayer Support team, praying for those 'on the ground' each Wednesday
- § Helping with BBQ and other activities as required at Dunclug PS fun night on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June
- § Assisting with the Church Open and Family Fun Morning on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Next Wednesday night (30<sup>th</sup>) will be our launch night where further information will be provided, an opportunity to 'sign up' will be given, as well as some training and guidelines. Please pray for this venture!

## Midweek ministry @ Ballyloughan

worshipping, growing, caring, serving, engaging

Preparing to Leave the building!

The locked room in the house story! The mystery, the unknown, the resentment, the questions!

Our aim as Christians should be to demystify, to be accessible, to show that church has something to offer the community, to engage...

5 brief principles in preparation for the church leaving the building:

1. **Mission** \_\_\_\_\_. The God whom we follow is a God who has a heart for people. Remember Jesus' parables and their context in Luke 15 – the lost sheep, the lost coin, the Prodigal Son. The common thread running through the stories is that something of great value was missing. All people matter to God, and they matter to God so much that He's going on an all-out search for them. And he says to us his followers, "*people matter so much to Me. They matter so much to me that I have begun an all-out search to bring them back to Me so that they can know my love and my presence in their lives. And I want you as my followers to continue this process of searching, inviting and making known my love.*"

Mission, this heart-beat of God for people is to be at the centre of all that we do.

2. **Mission** \_\_\_\_\_. 'Robert' on the train story – the guilt, feeling of failure he experienced.

Significantly, God just wants us to be ourselves. He doesn't want us to be something we're not. We don't have to go through life gritting our teeth, clenching our fists and wiping the beads of sweat off our brow prior to forcing a gospel conversation with a complete stranger. But God does want us to bear a credible witness to Jesus in whatever context we find ourselves. And we bear witness to Jesus in those settings through our actions and attitudes, in our behaviour and relationships, by our ambitions and our motivation. We evidence the love of God through our gentleness and thoughtfulness, through our refusal to tramp on others and undermine their credibility in our gossip. We love and serve even those who aren't very nice to us sometimes. And such behaviour will surely give us opportunity to explain the good news that is Jesus.

**3. Mission** \_\_\_\_\_ . Reflections on my trip to the bookies!!! This, I suggest, is how most people today feel about going to church. Church is where we feel safe and comfortable. Church is where non-Christians feel embarrassed and awkward. We've got to take the gospel, and indeed the church, out of our cosy, safe, ghetto and into the community around us, like Jesus did (e.g. Mark 2:13-17, Mark 7) even though for it he faced criticism. Jesus goes outside of the ghetto, beyond the boundaries. But he reached across a greater divide than that. Jesus had all the splendour and security of heaven, but he reached outside his ghetto and came to earth, and served and suffered and died so that we might know God's love for us. That wasn't a safe thing for Jesus to do, at times it was a scary thing! And Jesus urges us out of the ghetto. As the Father sent him, so he sends us (John 20:21).

**4. Mission** \_\_\_\_\_ . The fear of failure can be a significant impediment to the work of the gospel. It's better to take gospel initiatives that fail than to fail to take gospel initiatives. The parable of the talents (Matthew 25: 14-30). Two servants invest their talent of money, one hides it in the ground, the safe place. Jesus brands him as a 'wicked, lazy servant.' Can be applied to people who are determined to retain the status quo and avoid risk and adventure for the gospel. You see it is not a sin to try a gospel initiative that fails. But it is a sin not to try gospel initiatives, not to risk.

**5. Mission** \_\_\_\_\_ . Matthew 28:18-20: "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"



## GROWING

Mission for Everyone – Read 1 Peter 3: 13-16

- Who initiates a gospel conversation in v15 and why do they initiate it?
- What is the link between 'setting apart Christ as Lord' in our hearts and being asked questions about the gospel?
- What kind of behaviour will provoke questions from those who aren't Christians (look back over 2:12 – 3:12)?
- As well as applying this passage to our individual lives, how could this passage be applied to our corporate life as a church? The following quotation from Jim Wallis may stir your thoughts:  
*"Evangelism in our day has largely become a packaged production, a mass-marketed experience in which evangelists strain to answer that question which nobody is asking...when the life of the church no longer raises any questions, evangelism degenerates."*

Mission outside the ghetto - Read Mark 7 vs 1-8, 14-23, 24-30

- What is the Pharisees main concern in these verses? How as a result did they treat those who didn't know God? (Remember from a sermon two weeks ago that they believed that any kind of contact with Gentiles made them 'unclean')
- What effect do you think this had on other people outside of the Jewish faith coming to know God?