

14<sup>th</sup> February 2010. 10.30am.  
Building: Outreach: Belonging x07.

## ***Getting rid of the stuff that will contaminate the building – spoils and makes impure.***

Last Sunday we made a tour around the Olympic site by bus.

We saw some amazing buildings under construction – in fact it was a whole village or really a small town. Much of it will remain after 2010.

What is even more amazing though was all the processes that had been gone through to get the site ready for building and then to keep it clean. For 400 years industry in that area included textile printing in the 17 century, and petrol factories in the 18 century. The waste of bone, varnish, tallow works, distilleries, engineering and chemical plants was there. Since the 19 century half the site was used for land fill and all sorts of rubbish dumped there. So about 75% of the site was contaminated with petrol, oil, or heavy metals like lead and arsenic.

The site has had to be cleared and tonnes of soil cleaned and washed. On top of this cleaned soil we now see the Olympic park, stadium, Aquatics Centre, Velopark and much more.

As we drove round the site I heard people gasp at just how much contamination there had been – without the digging, sorting washing and so on the site would have been unfit for human habitation and the games.

**When Peter wrote to the people of God who were the diaspora scattered throughout northern Asia Minor he had to remind them of the need to get rid of all the things that contaminate God's building work.**

The people Peter wrote to were not in an easy situation – they were not in a stable situation but the building of God's "spiritual temple" still had to go ahead. They were persecuted and suffering because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Peter wants to encourage them – he encourages them to accept the suffering as a test as to how genuine their faith in Jesus is. He reminds them of the hope they can have in the return and revelation of Jesus. Chapter 1:

- v3 Give thanks to God
- v11 remember Christ suffered
- v14 be obedient **v22** obedient to truth (this will purify us and give us a sincere love for fellow believers)

*v22 is a key verse because Peter reminds us that it is LOVE that holds the building together. Love is the cement! We are building with living stones – people: we are building relationships using the principles of love for God and neighbour.*

**In just the same way as the Olympic site needed to be cleared of all contamination so too we have to decontaminate our relationships as we build.**

**We need to get rid of those things which pollute relationships. And in just the same way that the Olympic site is made to function in a green way (e.g. heating system gas and wood pulp) we need to keep our relationships clean in an ongoing way.**

(vv24 & 25 of chapter one are a slight side step) Peter then instructs these scattered Christians to **GET RID of certain things which threaten to demolish relationships and to CRAVE THOSE THINGS WHICH NOURISH.**

The Jews rejected Jesus Christ but he was chosen by God as the corner stone, we too are chosen by God as a people (1:1) and 1:2 we are chosen with a purpose. (*E.G. Wednesday's Purpose driven Life*). We are not a regular brick building but a changing **amorphous 'building' that continually takes on the changing dimensions of God's assembled people.** *Wayne Grudem p99. 1988*). If someone else comes along or gets invited to join we say to one another , 'Budge up!' and the building changes again.

**We have spoken about the only foundation for this building being Jesus – otherwise the building will not survive the test of time and conditions but it is also essential that we get rid of those contaminants which weaken the building of community – the people of God.**

Peter uses the same idea as Paul to the Ephesians and Colossians, and the writer to the Hebrews and also James to talk about *getting rid of* or putting away certain thoughts and ways of behaving. **Basically all those sins which aim at harming others directly or in retaliation must go.**

- all evil or wickedness: that is thoughts & actions that are hateful or harmful to others,
- all deceit/ lying (guile – trickery, falsehood)
- hypocrisy (i.e. making things look alright on the outside when all is not right on the inside)
- jealousy (the opposite of being thankful for the good that comes to others)
- slander – insulting statements about others.

**Then (and Peter doesn't even allow a break of sentence!) we are to replace all the time and energy used in maintaining these bad things by craving things which will nourish – and build up.** It's as though Peter is saying – if you spend all your time and energy on thinking harmful thoughts about others & planning harmful actions you will have no time or inclination to crave things which nourish!

In fact the 2 go together – it's rather like a healthy diet - get rid of the things which contaminate and do the body no good but at the same time replace them with things that are good for you. Peter is not just talking to baby Christians when he talks about “pure spiritual milk” because some of these people have been Christian Disciples for 30 years – no rather he is encouraging them to long for the things that will nourish and also enable the “spiritual temple” the work of God to be built. (He talks about these things because he knows about them in his own life and has observed them in others). Ditch them – don't recycle them! (Confess them and but them in the fire!)

When the things that contaminate come in to spoil relationships amongst God's people we must get rid of them. Like old or dirty clothes we must refuse to put them back on again at the start of a day. When our brother or sister has wronged us we must forgive them rather than allowing hatred & resentment to grow on the building site. This may not be easy but it has to happen.

Peter has already told them that they are to live holy lives (available for God's use) READ v22 – we are to be obedient to the truth! And to develop and build a *sincere love for fellow believers*.

**How will we do this? Because if we don't the site will be contaminated again and the building of the community of God's people will be shaky and weak?**

**At one and the same time we need to crave what will nourish** – God's word particularly through the Scriptures and *v4 Coming to Jesus* the Word – lining up with the Living Corner Stone and at the same time we must make ourselves thank God for the good things in others and refuse to lie, or be hypocritical, or to slander or make insulting statements about others – particularly in the church.

**No one said that it was going to be easy.**

It would be much easier to learn to build with inert breeze blocks, steel and cement.

Christ has made a costly sacrifice (*1 Peter 1; 17 – 19*) and we are therefore in response to this called to live differently. *V22* By obedience to God we purify ourselves.

If each of us is living like this and craving what nourishes then we will build something healthy – to the praise and glory of God. A community to which other people will want to belong.