“Doing Gods Work”

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2 Men were preparing for the 1924 Paris Olympics (100 years ago)

Olympics again in Paris in 2024 – so the Keswick lecture focused on Edic Liddle who made history by winning the 400mtrs but as a sprinter he was favored to compete in the 100Mtrs and relays. His rival was Harold Abrahams.

Two very different men!

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Abrahams – felt that to win the 100Mtrs would be the thing that would define his whole existence.

“And now, in one hours time, I will be out there again. I will raise my eyes and look down that corridor – four feet wide, with ten lonely seconds to justify my whole existence. But will I. ?”

He had

- Ten Seconds
- To Prove his worth
- To justify his whole existence

He won.

When Abrahams won, Liddell was in the crowd watching and cheering him on.

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Liddell was the natural choice to run the 100 and 200 mtrs and the relays but because the heats where on a Sunday (Sabbath) he withdrew and did not compete because of his Christian beliefs and the fact that he observed the Sabbath as a day of rest.

In the bible Saturday is the Sabbath the day of rest until **On March 7, 321**, however, **Roman Emperor Constantine Ist** issued a civil decree making Sunday a day of rest from labor, stating:

> **“All judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun.”**

Sunday was taken to be the Sabbath in 1924 and now……"

Liddle did not feel he was defined by being fast or the fastest

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– but he is quoted as saying ***"God made me fast and with I run, I feel his pleasure"***

Having withdrawn from the 100mtr event he instead took part in the 400 mtrs.

He made history by winning the race in record time. He broke the mold concerning tactics for running this race by sprinting from the start he ran as fast as he could for the first 200 Mtrs and yet was able to keep going to win and setting a new **Olympic record at 47.6 seconds.**

His sister wanted him not to take part in the Olympics she felt this was not in Gods purpose but he did. He did not go on to pursue a career in athletics although that may have seemed an natural choice for him.

Eric Liddell went on to be a teacher in China and then returned to Scotland to train to be a Minister of the church. He was following what he believed to be Gods will for his live.

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"He found his worth in following what he believed to be Gods will for him in live."

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He died in his 40's having served as a teacher and Missionary in China and served time in a prison camp.

In addition to his allocated duties, he volunteered to clean the toilets in addition to his other duties at that time.

Does this story have any significance for us here today?

I went to Keswick this year as a volunteer – but was also wanting to consider my own priorities in life today – after some changes in my circumstances!

- **Did God have a purpose for me today?**
- **What are my priorities today?**
- **What gift (or gifts) has God given me and what does he want me to do with those gifts today.**

The story of Eric Liddell spoke to me – I see some parallels – my interests in **leading worship** and **in technology** are also finding and outlet in the church here today.

So I came back home with a sense of purpose to continue the work I do for the local church here and our wider parish. **So you are stuck with me for now!!!!!**

Think about the two athletes we heard about.

- **Abrahams felt that being the fastest was his fulfillment in life – that was end objective for him he needed to do this as measure of his own worth.**
- **Liddel on the other hand saw his worth/purpose to work through Gods plan in his own live.**
- **He considered that to be much more than just winning a race and setting a world record.**
- **He went on to devote his own life to preaching the gospel as a missionary.**

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For me – "I feel gods pleasure in leading worship and working to develop the use of technology" to help both locally and across our entire parish.

But that is not that I want to be seen as my worth – rather I want to help people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and to come to a point where they may choose to become a follower of him by being a born again believer.

This gives us a hope of a live after this one in Gods presence.

I remember talking to a friend about the Jesus Story. The fact that he came to this earth to be the ultimate sacrifice for mankind's sinfulness. That sin that spoiled Gods creation (Perfect) as it was way back in the garden of Eden. We know that story, but I want people know that there is an opportunity to know redemption through the belief that Jesus die in our place so that we may enjoy eternity in his presence. Of course we are still destined to die at the end of this life unless Jesus come back again before that time comes.

This is why I continue to service Gods purpose here in the Kemnay and the wider parish.

The passage we heard read today was all about God given gifts being used in the church today.

- **Spiritual Gifts – all from the same Spirit**
- **Different kinds of Service – but for the same Lord**
- **Different kinds of Working – but all for the same God**

God has a plan and we have an opportunity to be part of his plan

There is a verse from the Old testament from Jeremiah Ch29 Vs 11

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"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

So God wants the best for us – he wants the best for is in life and he wants us to enjoy life eternal in heaven in his presence. That is the thing that was most important to Eric Liddle and the thing that really drove him to service Gods purpose.

God has a purpose for every Christian, every born again believer, and that purpose is to achieve good things in life and also to have hope and a future. We have an opportunity to do Gods work here in Kemnay and the wider parish and that could our essential contribution to building Gods Kingdom here on earth. But that is not the end point! The hope of life eternal in Gods presence should be our ultimate goal. That is a goal that outshine anything we may achieve in this life.

The bible passage says a lot about how should work together to prosper the church in out time. We could feel despondent about some aspects of the church today. But we need to look beyond the established church – the organization!! and focus on growing the body of Christ which is what we are all part of.

Paul ends the chapter by saying
"27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues[d]? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts."

Then comes the last sentence

"And yet I will show you the most excellent way"

We need to read the next chapter to find out about that – you know the chapter I am sure.

It starts

13 If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal……

(Slide)