

Sermon Lent 2 : 17 March 2019 – Luke 13:31-end

“Oh don’t go on the train to your meeting in Sandy mum, you have to change at Hitchin and it’ll take you ages especially if a train is cancelled it’s so much more hassle for you than taking the car”....

“Well....I am trying to be eco and use public transport.....Oh I get it now you want me to take the car so I can do a slight detour and pick you up from your friend’s house on my way back, so you don’t have to get a bus!”

“Ah well....worth a try”

- On the face of it, it looks as if the Pharisees are trying to be nice to Jesus – to protect him from Herod’s violence but when we remember who the Pharisees were, then alarm bells should start to ring. What if they really just wanted to stop Jesus going to Jerusalem because they feared what Jesus would do there, because he was getting a huge following and people were more attracted to his teaching than theirs. (think ahead to Palm Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey and crowds hailed him as their Saviour)- perhaps the Pharisees were beginning to feel they were losing the respect and control of the Jews, plus tensions were rising and they could probably sense some kind of show down at Passover in Jerusalem?
- But Jesus is having none of it.
- Jesus as always, is wise to them, and deflects their argument into something they both agree on: Herod being an enemy. Jesus calls Herod a fox, a cunning predator and tells them to go up to Herod and proclaim that he, Jesus, is aware of his mission and nothing is going to stop what he has to do. (Not very likely they’ll do that!)
- Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, where he knows he is to die. He is clear that God the Father’s timing has now come and he must fulfil what his Father has sent him to do. He will be betrayed by his own people and handed over to the Romans to be crucified. So he will not be diverted by a few “kind “ remarks from the Pharisees to turn back and avoid the confrontation that is brewing in Jerusalem just so they don’t have to get involved.

In this passage Jesus sets us a great example of being faithful to God, to what He is calling each of us to do in our lives to play our part in sharing God’s love and helping build the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

I wonder what God is calling you to do?

What you can be sure about is that it won’t be sitting in church on a Sunday and then not being aware of your Christian faith in the rest of the week. His Holy Spirit has a habit of turning lives upside down – just as Jesus turned the accepted order of things on their head in his day.

- Maybe you are being called to pray a little more and widen your focus onto more of the world’s problems (even when it’s difficult to see where the extra time would come from...)
- Maybe you are being called to nurture the next generation – as a mother hen nurtures her offspring – being called as a parent, grandparent or carer (even though sometimes you wish they’d just do as they are told!)

- Maybe you are being called to actively support other people in the community (even though you've never really thought it's your thing)
- So how do you know what God is calling you to do?
- Listen out for a little niggling voice in your head, the same ideas returning – that could well be God's Holy Spirit drawing you closer to God and giving you inspiration.
- If it seems like a very big change – a new job, standing up for action against climate change, giving up a lot of your time to help someone with health or disability problems, or more involvement in church and finding out more about Christianity – **Don't worry:** God won't leave you stranded.
- If you draw nearer to Him through praying and reading the bible, he will draw nearer to you and he will support you and guide you through whatever he has in mind for you to transform your life.
- Our Christian God is Trinitarian –and it's all about relationship : Father, Son and Holy Spirit.... and us. God made us to be in relationship with Him and with each other.
- We need Him, and we come unstuck when we distance ourselves from Him and think we can sort everything ourselves, when we put ourselves at the centre rather than the God of unconditional love.
- Sometimes we have been through so much – due to our age, serious illness, bereavement, job loss or continued stress at work or a family crisis – that God is just calling us at that moment to stop and renew ourselves, to enjoy fellowship with other Christians and to rest in His love – and for some of us that is the hardest call of all –
- But Lent seems a really good time for each of us to stop for a while actually and recognise the huge overwhelming love that God is so keen to give us, without us having to do anything to earn it.
- So why don't we just let Jesus take us under his wing as the mother hen does to her chicks, and let him gently encourage and feed us.... take our burdens from us,heal and restore us..... and then set us out on the path God wants us to follow.

Amen

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