

TFTD 25.36 Tuesday April 15th

Still so much to learn: Luke 22.24-38



When you look back on your school days what do you remember? The friends you made, the smell of school dinners, the teachers and their ‘quirks’. Consider the subjects you were good and bad at: can you see why some came more naturally to you than others? Were the aptitudes you gained practical or academic? or maybe you were the all-rounder who was also great at sport – I’m sure many of you were!

Then the skills you have learned since, your profession, your hobbies, the things that you are the ‘go-to person’ for, whether that’s wiring a plug or cooking the perfect Yorkshire pudding or climbing through narrow spaces to explore the underground!

Malcolm Gladwell’s popular “10,000-Hour Rule” suggests that true expertise comes from focused practice; of effort, of learning, of watching and working at it. With time for sleep and a little down time, that’s about the equivalent of 1250 8-hour days of effort. Work that out in years, then it’s 3 years, 4 months. Not far off the amount of time Jesus had been with his disciples teaching, explaining, encouraging and providing an example.

And yet, here we are, just after the Last Supper, hours before Jesus is

betrayed and brought to trial, here they are arguing about who is the greatest! In the face of all they had been told to expect, how trivial, how self-indulgent, how frustrating, how human?

And yet, Jesus doesn't rebuke them harshly. Instead, he patiently redefines greatness once again: "The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves." In a world obsessed with climbing the ladder, Jesus flips it upside down.

Even Peter, in this very passage, is warned he will deny Jesus. And yet, Jesus' focus isn't on the failure, but on the future: "When once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Here we see grace - amazing grace that knows we'll fall but calls us to get back up. Jesus doesn't cancel Peter. He commissions him.

Jesus calls us to a radically different kind of greatness—the kind that quietly serves, that loves when it's hard, that stays even when others walk away. A different kind of greatness requiring daily practice: in praying, in listening, in serving, in forgiving. Jesus calls on ordinary people, just like us, and doesn't wait until we've put in our 10,000 hours to love or use us.

So, there are many times when we might feel as clueless as the disciples appear here. At such times I'm grateful for the comforting words of Andrew Roberts in his book *Holy Habits* (2016) "In the Gospels we observe the disciples beginning to be formed in Christlike character as they follow Jesus. Reassuringly for those of us who follow in their footsteps, their journeying towards Christ-like character is full of ups and downs, triumphs and failures. They seem to get as much wrong as they get right but critically, poignantly and wonderfully even when they get it most wrong and deny and abandon Jesus, Jesus does not deny and abandon them."

God bless,

Rhona

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:

Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.



Luke 22.24-38

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

‘You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

‘Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!’ Jesus said, ‘I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.’

Purse, Bag, and Sword

He said to them, ‘When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?’ They said, ‘No, not a thing.’ He said to them, ‘But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, “And he was counted among the lawless”; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.’ They said, ‘Lord, look, here are two swords.’ He replied, ‘It is enough.’

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