



St. John's Southbourne

Daily Reflection from Matt

Let's continue to spend time reflecting on God's word in prayerful quiet today, remembering God's faithfulness to us in his word and in his Spirit.

Pause

*I try to let go of concerns and worries
that may be dragging me down at this present moment
I place any concerns I have in God's hands
- at least for these few minutes of prayer.*

Rejoice

We can rejoice in God's protection, reminding ourselves that David calls us to trust him in the ancient words of Psalm 27:4-5

Of David

*One thing I ask from the Lord,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.
For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.*

Luke 14:25-33

We are living in a situation in which every course of action, every decision taken or not, is being costed. Tragically, the lives of people are being balanced alongside the costs of closed businesses, unemployment, lost education and mental wellbeing. It is not a position any of us would relish, I am sure. There is an irony in today's Psalm, even the cost of having the house of the Lord open for worship is considered too high.

A large crowd had begun to follow Jesus, perhaps they were curious about the Teacher from Nazareth. He may not have passed that way before on his way to Jerusalem. The crowd may be more than curious, interested even in following him. Jesus challenges them to think about what they might be getting into.

The two examples Jesus gives are of people who did not realise the cost of what they might lose by following Jesus Christ as his disciple. Jesus puts it in stark terms, "anyone who comes to me and does not hate his father....." and so on. We would probably not use this language ourselves, Jesus exaggerated to make the point, (rather than break up families!) remember we are to love even our enemies, so something else is being described. For people to choose Jesus is to prefer his way over any other. Often Jesus is comforting, but here, he tells it like it is, that the going gets tough.

Why should we choose his way then? Because when we think about it, it is the only one that makes sense. In each of the examples Jesus gave the large crowd, he encourages them to think about what they have committed too. To think about what it means for them, for their plans, for the obstacles and challenges they would face. But to carry a cross meant to die. To die to oneself, our fears and our plans....but dying in this way also brings life. Life with God.

If we recall the paths that we have come along as we have followed Jesus, have they not been harder than this? Haven't we all lost things we thought priceless, and yet still we continue. And do we not continue because we want to see Jesus at the end? And hasn't Jesus been faithful all the way? And if he has been faithful so far, do we think he will give up on us now?

A lot of our walk of faith is giving up material and emotional dependency in exchange for relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Each loss can hurt, deeply. and leave us uncomfortable for a bit, but each step is another toward the freedom that faith alone brings.

Yielding prayer

Father help me to live this day to the full, being true to you in every way. Jesus help me to give myself away to others, being kind to everyone I meet Spirit, help me to seek the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.

Amen