

Wrigton and Lynch Chapels Minister's Website Article for October 2021

I'll be honest: one of my gripes about modern society is the way we encourage narcissists. Television loves people who like nothing more than showing off their body or achievements and thinking only of themselves. That's one reason why I never watch 'Love Island,' 'Take Me Out,' or any of the (what seems to me) sleazy tat. There, I've said it.

Yet, the gospel would say, 'Hang on, Duncan. God loves those people as much as he loves you. There may be many reasons why they're like that. You don't like the product, but you can't judge the heart.'

True, and I'm humbled. It reminds me of the sons of Zebedee - James and John. In Matthew 20, their mother brings them to Jesus. Imagine their embarrassment. They are grown men, but mum still wants to champion their cause.

Nearly all mums do. Their children may be criminals, but mum sees their best; and if you speak against them, watch out. This mum thinks her children are fantastic and wants Jesus to let them sit either side of him when he rules his kingdom; woe betide even Jesus if he says anything bad about them.

This text is so human. It shows her faith in Jesus and her love for her boys. Perhaps she prayed for them for years. It's easy to criticise her, but she had faith and love. Jesus had just said, 'Bad things will happen to me,' and she said, 'When you enter your kingdom.'

That's faith. You've got to believe in God's love, even when bad things happen. You have to believe, even when your child dies. You have to believe God loves you, even when you've messed up.

Notice, Jesus didn't condemn her. He didn't put her down or mock her request. I suspect that Jesus said, 'We'll see. Let me talk to your boys. 'I don't think she would have left otherwise.

The incident gave Jesus a great opportunity to teach us all something important, especially for when we say: 'I'm better than them.' The disciples did that, and I love Jesus' reaction. The disciples were saying, 'How could she! 'That's self-righteousness. They said, 'How could those boys allow their mother to do this? 'That's self-righteousness. Yet Jesus didn't condemn anybody. He called them round and said, 'Let me tell you something. 'Then he gave incredible teaching on the danger of the elitist among God's people.

In all this, we see why we can trust Jesus. He was God, but was so human - the most real and complete human of us all. He faced suffering. He could have been narcissistic and say, 'I'm better than you. I shouldn't go through this. Even if I do, I'm great and can cope without anyone's help.' But he didn't. He turned to James and John and said, 'It will be tough. Can you walk this road with me?'

I don't think he's saying, 'I'm fantastic, but you can't manage it.' I think he's saying, 'It will be tough for me. I need friends alongside me. Can you be those friends?'

Perhaps that's what those television narcissists missed. They haven't had real deep-down friends who support them and tell them the truth. Perhaps they've never seen the love of God reflected in someone else. Whatever the reason, we should think hard before we look down on anyone - even if we think they are narcissists. None of us can be good enough, but Jesus died for us anyway.

Every blessing

Duncan