

Wrington and Lynch Chapels

Minister's Website Article for November 2021

One great dichotomy in Christian life is the difference between suffering and joy. The bible is clear that life will be tough, but our joy is in the knowledge that Jesus walks with us and our eternal future is secure. We live with those in tension.

We see that with Jesus. One of the saddest texts is in the gospel of John. Jesus has been teaching about great things, and everyone follows him. The blind can see. Crutches are thrown in the air, cripples dance. Dead people get up and walk. Everybody says, 'Wow 'He gets a big crowd. Then he starts to tackle some heavy themes to do with truth, reality and suffering, and people start to think, 'I have another appointment.' The disciples are still there - just about - but they're nervous. They thought they would have a big crowd behind them, swoop into Jerusalem and run the Romans out. Now, everybody is leaving. Then Jesus looks at the disciples and, in his question there is such sadness: 'Are you going to leave too? '

Can you see the humanness of Jesus? Christians believe Jesus was truly God and truly human. Here he is human, just like us. And that's hard. Maybe Jesus worried that the disciples would say, 'Yeah, I'm leaving.' But they didn't. They said: 'Where do you think we're going to go? You've got the word of life. We'll stay with you. 'I tell you, Jesus went from sadness to great rejoicing. Isn't it great to know your friends support you no matter what? In another place, Jesus said, 'Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink? 'In other words, 'Can you walk this hard road with me? 'He's talking about pain and suffering. He's saying, 'Can you be my friend, walk this with me? 'That's not a rebuff. It's a cry that shows his humanness.

In the book of Hebrews, the writer explains why that is important. Jesus has been tempted at all points, as we have. So he understands. Are you lonely? do you walk some places where nobody will walk with you; nobody understands? They make fun of you and don't want to be your friend. That's hard. But, you can trust Jesus, because he's been there, done that.

A man called Walter had a coronary, and was in intensive care. His minister went to visit and sat with him for an hour. The doctor said Walter would be fine: 'Tomorrow we'll move him into a normal ward. 'It was nearly midnight, and the minister said, 'Walter, I'm going home. 'Walter said, 'Can't you stay a bit longer. 'But the minister said, 'I'm so tired I can't keep my eyes open. I'll come back tomorrow and see you. 'So they prayed and the minister left. Walter died that night. The minister knew Walter was lonely, and wanted him to stay, but he didn't. So that minister cried during the funeral; not just

because he loved Walter, but because he felt he had failed him. That's what Christians are called to do for others. Stay when everyone else has left. Reach out and care. Jesus was like that.

Later, Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, going through some agonising decisions. His disciples went to sleep, and he said, 'Can't you stay awake with me a little while?' There is great pathos there. That was God expressing human need. It's the same need that you and I feel. Jesus cried out for friends. Yes, Jesus is now King of Kings. He's doing fine. But he made a decision to be our friend. His cry is still the same, 'Will you stay with me a while?' Jesus still has needs; but those needs are in the people. Look around, look at those needs, and reach out to them. Jesus has needs expressed not in himself but in others. People need people. That's why he put us together. Jesus said it's alright to need each other. That's what Christianity is all about.

Every blessing

Duncan