

Lent Meditations

8th March 2020

Luke 14:25-35

(Simon Perry)

Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

To carry your cross is to be a condemned criminal: you are on your way to execution.

To carry your cross is to follow Jesus to execution: you have already accepted that your life is over.

To carry your cross is to live as though your life is over: your hopes, your ambitions, your potential, your future, your past, your legacy, your name – all are gone.

All that is left, after crucifixion, is unspeakable shame.

Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Great – well we don't like the sound of that. So why don't we sugar-coat the cross, silver-plate the ugliness, and hang it round our neck. That way, you can carry your cross without the death sentence, and without even the inconvenience.

But to wear a cross around your neck, is much the same as wearing a board that says, 'shame'.

To wear the cross is to accept that, you are under sentence of death.

To wear a cross is to declare that what's left of your life is nothing other than a stay of execution.

Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

This cross conveys that all justice is displaced by the cold dominance of order.

This cross unmasks hope as a fantasy, and decrees that fairness is destined for failure.

This cross reveals that revolutionary love is crushed under the weight of a sensible status quo.

This cross warns everyone that the Kingdom of God is destroyed by the wrecking ball of what is widely perceived as right, and fair, and proper.

Whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Luke 23:33-38

(Jane Andrews)

They mocked him and sneered at him. They gave him sour wine, the drink of slaves, and laughed at him for being unable, or so they thought, to save himself. With contempt in their hearts and jeering on their lips, they called him the King of the Jews. And in their derision, those soldiers told the truth.

Because our king is not Herod, who the Romans the local despot, nor Caesar who ruled all the known world.

Our king is not an elected official, whether she be motivated by compassion or courting the popular vote.

Our king is not a religious leader nor an inspirational speaker,

Not the Hollywood movie star advocating an end to global poverty nor the online influencer offering wellness tips.

Our king is not the tech billionaire using his wealth to save us from disease or climate change.

How ever good their intentions, however popular their proposals, however compelling their methods, this is not how God chose to save the world.

God chose the mocked, the sneered at, the outcast.

Our king is the woman with learning disabilities who longs for a job or a girlfriend.

Our king is the child at school whose clothes are never clean and whose homework is always forgotten.

Our king is the old man waiting for death in a hospital bed.

Our king is the new mum who just can't seem to love her baby.

Our king is the homeless soldier who sleeps on the streets and drinks away his PTSD.

Our king is the humiliated and brutalised prisoner, nailed to a cross.

Our king is the last person you would want to be or want to know.

And we will be with him in paradise.