

2019-03-17 ... 6.30pm Evensong ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Jeremiah 22: 1 – 9, 13 – 17; Luke 14: 27 – 33

'Possessions'

Introduction ...

If there was to be a survey of the most guilt-inducing verse in the Bible, I suspect that Luke 14:33 – the last verse in tonight's New Testament reading – would be pretty near the top:

**Jesus says: So therefore none of you
can become my disciple if you do not
give up all of your possessions.**

Looking around tonight – including at myself – I don't see anyone who has clearly and obviously done so.

Does that mean that none of us are Christian disciples?

It is an important question.

It is interesting to note that it's only in Luke's Gospel that we have the account of Zacchaeus – the small Tax Collector who shinned up a tree and was told to relinquish some of his money – but not all his possessions.

It's also only in Luke's Gospel that we read of the women who supported Jesus from out of their wealth – their possessions – which raises the issue of how Christian mission can be supported if all Christians have given everything away ...

Context ...

So what are we to make of these words: **'None of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions'?**

Notice what comes before: words about counting the cost ... don't start building a tower unless you know you can finish it.

So is Jesus saying that – for anyone who follows him – there's a 'warning' – that such following means that every part of our life is then put at his disposal ... and if we're not prepared for that ... we'd better not start ...

One person's prayerful reflection on this passage – Henry Wansbrough is this:

**Lord, you don't help me count the cost
for how can I know that the cost will be?
You just demand simply that I put before
you everything, that nothing at all
may count beside you.
No bargaining. No calculating.
Give me the strength and courage to
tender you this fiercest of loyalties.**

PTO

Conclusion ...

So – this Lent – how do we respond to these words of Jesus?

We need to discern what God is calling us to be and to do. That's very personal ... it won't be the same for each of us – except that it begins for each of us by putting everything, every aspect of our lives at his disposal.

I'm going to finish with some advice from a Jesuit priest to a Mother Superior – back in 1692:

**All God requires of you is
to seek, desire, will, endeavour
but one thing, to wit:
that His will be done in and by
you.
Do not concern yourself what
grace, virtue, prayer, presence
of God,
success in your employment to
His honour,
you have;
desire not to have anything,
even of virtue,
but as far as it is His will to put
it in you;
not to do anything
for His glory or the good of others,
but what He shall be pleased to do by you.**

(Fr Sabran S.J. to Mother Mary Herbert 1692)