

Job 39: 1 – 40: 4; Hebrews 12: 1 – 17

'Wisdom from Jesus'

Introduction ...

The trailer was last week: this evening we move on to the **Full Version**.

Our Old Testament reading continued to point out that we are lacking wisdom ... God is the source of wisdom.

And our New Testament reading began with the word **'therefore'** ... and as I mentioned last week, whenever you read or hear **'therefore'** – ask yourself what it is 'there for'?

In the passage from Hebrews, we've just been given multiple marvellous examples of **faith in action** – all the way through **Chapter 11** ... so in the light of these, **Chapter 12** begins: ***'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our Faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.'***

Looking to Jesus ... If we are seeking wisdom **look to Jesus** – the wisdom and the power of God.

But how?

But how? I'd like to give you a 'worked through example' ... from an illustration I used last week.

Supposing something has changed for you and you now have free time each Tuesday morning ... you wonder about offering this time:

To help at the Foodbank, but then you're aware of 2 other possibilities:

To help with reading at one of our schools or

To give regular time to visiting two neighbours who seem to be struggling

How do you decide?

How does **'looking to Jesus'** make a difference – after all, you're not going to open one of the Gospels and find any verse that says: **You must go and help with reading at the Infant Academy!!**

There are at least 2 useful ways to look to Jesus:

Regular Bible reading ...

The first is perhaps the most obvious – if you have a pattern of regular Bible reading – ask Jesus to use this to guide you.

An example from my life – *I'd just been asked to lead a Scripture Union camp for teenagers and I was almost too young for their insurance to cover me ... I was also keenly aware that there were other people who had previously helped on the Team (as I had) who were older and who had more experience. The Bible notes I was using at the time were going through **I Kings 3** – not perhaps the most obvious place to look for guidance – but in it, Solomon says he's too young to take over from his father, David – and God, in effect, replies:*

PTO

'Get on with it – and I'll give you the wisdom you need.'

A pattern of regular Bible reading gives God the opportunity to guide you.

And one other way is less defined – more diffuse. This is to start times of prayer asking Jesus to guide you and see what he brings to mind.

But – you might ask – how can I be sure that I'm not making it up myself – either to suit me or perhaps – just as likely – to choose the one I find hardest because I somehow believe that's bound to be the one God wants me to do! (Not true by the way!!)

Two things help here – **one** is to remember that God loves you deeply – just as much as he loves those he may call you to serve ... and **the second** is to ask God to nurture in yourself an attitude of **indifference**. Indifference – not in the sense of lacking passion or energy but in the Ignatian sense ... ***I want to serve God in whatever way God wants me to serve ...***

Let me give you an illustration – some of you will remember Mitzie – the dog I had when I first came here. I had her whilst in Chester too – and we used to walk through the City centre to the meadows first thing in the morning. There was a lot of litter – including from takeaways around. Being a Labrador – she became McMitzie as she tried to get hold of each possible chip or hamburger!! Except ... except ... if she had a tennis ball in her mouth ... her passion for tennis balls made her indifferent to everything else!

Our passion to follow Jesus – in the way he wants us to do so can help us to be indifferent to which way that is – and free to move as the Holy Spirit directs.

Conclusion ...

So if your basic desire is to follow Jesus – ask him for the grace of indifference when it comes to decision making – the freedom to follow his calling – and see what the Spirit guides you to do ... and talk about it with other Christians.

In the case of that free time on a Tuesday morning – it could be:

The feeding of the 5000 – pointing towards the Foodbank **or**

Let the children come to me – pointing towards school reading **or**

Maybe Jesus sending out the 12 or the 72 – perhaps you could encourage others into these ministries **or**

Maybe Jesus inviting you to sit and rest with him ... time for prayer, reflection or some kind of re-creation space on a Tuesday morning? **Looking to Jesus – the power and the wisdom of God ...**

Let's continue to do that as individuals and as a church.

Amen.