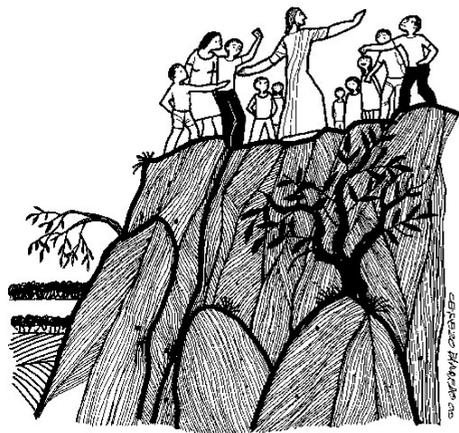


Time to recalibrate

The sermon given by Rev Liz Crumlish
at the St Margaret's eucharist on 30 January 2022

The readings were Jeremiah 1.4–10, 1 Corinthians 13.1–13 and Luke 4.21–30



This week I've been particularly drawn to the last sentence in our Gospel: "... he passed through the midst of them and went on his way".

How that has resonated with me this week, and perhaps you too: "... he passed through the midst of them and went on his way".

How often have you wanted to just keep walking – through the crowd and the noise, through the debates and the discussion, through the anxiety and the confusion, through the posturing and the pontificating? "...he passed through the midst of them and went on his way".

In a week when we've heard more crazy things about our government and the institutions that underpin the fabric of our society.

In a week when more migrants have taken to little boats in dangerous waters.

In a week when it seems world leaders have learned nothing about war.

In a week when we've remembered the Holocaust, pledging "never again", yet knowing that hate crimes are on the rise, and seeing our culture edging closer and closer to the kind of indifference and weariness that allows such intolerance to arise in our midst, I want to retreat.

I want to retreat – not to escape the noise and confusion, but to get my head straight.

I want to retreat – not to ignore all that is going on, but to take it all in.

I want to retreat – not to shirk what God is asking of me, but to discern it anew.

I want to retreat – not to conserve my energy, but to gather my courage to jump back in.

I don't believe Jesus passed through the midst of them and went on his way to escape what they might do to him.

I believe he kept on walking because he had work to do:

In presenting his manifesto, that came from God ...

In recognising that the Spirit of God was on him, that he was appointed to bring good news for the poor, release for the captive, sight for the blind – the whole kit and caboodle ...





In recognising that, and in seeing how his own kith and kin reacted, Jesus needed to take time to reset, to get his head straight, to gather his courage, so that he could get back to it.

Get back to confounding years of tradition.

Get back to questioning years of entitlement.

Get back to demonstrating the costly nature of living out God's radical message of love and inclusion.

Jesus' call wasn't simply to shore up the religious institutions of his day. Or to be silent about the latest political pronouncements that condemned many to harsh lives of poverty and injustice.

His call was to question those in authority – in church and in state – and to model a new way – a way that transcends all our notions of right and wrong, that oversteps every line we could possibly imagine.

Our communities are full of tired and restless people right now.

Surviving two years of a global pandemic has opened our eyes to possibility – to the good that communities can do and be when they work together.

And it has opened our eyes to the appalling lack of leadership or compassion or moral compass that exists elsewhere.

We, as Christ's body can no longer be silently compliant in the many injustices of the world. It's not enough to slip back into our familiar routines and practices.

As we are assaulted by a cacophony of noise in the world – as we witness anger and protest and discontent in our communities – our call is to recalibrate what God demands of us today. To walk on through the noise of the crowds, the haters and the doubters, and to find newness of purpose in the one who called us before we were born.

As we read in Jeremiah:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations ... today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

(Jeremiah 1:5,10)

Do not underestimate the power of taking time out to recalibrate.

Do not underestimate the difference you can make.

Do not underestimate the power of love that “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things”.

(1 Corinthians 13)

For the love of God.

Amen.

The illustration is one of a series of Gospel illustrations by Cerezo Barredo that you can enjoy – and be moved by – at <https://tinyurl.com/tsbv642k>.