

28<sup>th</sup> May Thoughts.

### Defying Logic?

As I sat in my garden thinking about what to write – frankly hoping for some divine inspiration as I don't consider myself a natural wordsmith – I just decided to sit quietly and listen to the world around me and to look at that world.

Now I've been around for nearly 70 years so you might wonder what I could see or hear that I hadn't before? Not an unreasonable question. But it's not about whether I think I've seen or heard or experienced what is around me at that moment because it cannot be the same as anything that has existed just a moment before!

How do I come to that conclusion? I've seen the house, the garden, the trees and flowers, the birds and insects, the sky, the clouds, felt the breeze etc just like anyone else would, so what's changed? The truth is that whatever all of these were a second ago, is not the same as they are now, nor will be in a second's time. EVERYTHING is in constant movement and thus change. From the atoms that everything is made of, upwards in scale. You might say "Yes, but the house and the land don't go anywhere!" But they do. They are all on or part of this world of ours which itself is orbiting the sun and that is moving through a galaxy that itself is moving through the universe.

A simpler example is if you sit beside a flowing stream and watch the water in front of you. The water and all it contains that is in front of at this moment is past and away, never to return in the blink of an eye.

One of the things about change is that all of us don't like it at some level. We like things to stay constant and don't worry about the planetary motion of the movement of water or air that we can't control. For some it is more than just an uncomfortable or inconvenient thought that the "status quo" is not even static. For some it is a real phobia (medically called Metathesiophobia ) but in all of us there are times when we'll resist or even defy change irrespective of how right and necessary and logical it may be. So, what does that mean for us?

One of the things that Jesus was trying to address in his early ministry was written about in the Gospel according to Matthew, was that the faith of the people of Israel had sort of got stuck in a rut. It wasn't a living, breathing, religion that changed to help them through dealing with the world around them which was inconstant change. Quite the opposite. They tried to make the world change to fit the religion.

They still held the basic Laws of Moses and the Covenant with God, BUT..... found ways to "interpret" it to cross every "T" and dot every "I" when in fact if they hadn't tried to "amend, clarify, adjust, qualify" and otherwise come up with a more convenient set of rules. This had

the effect of locking in a social and political and economic structure which maintained a status quo that benefited the rich and powerful whether they were in the Priesthood or the Civil leadership. If not for this, they wouldn't have been in so much need of reminding of the original basic Laws given by God to Moses. Several times over the history of the Jewish peoples, prophets had appeared and warned them that they had strayed off the beaten path and each time a significant change occurred when the prophets were ignored – a calamity if you were part of the ruling classes that consequently were dispossessed – after which the whole society went back to fundamentals and started again more simply.

At the time of Jesus's ministry in Galilee, He is spreading the word that the Law of Moses is all you must obey. He gets the attention of the Jews in the surrounding countryside by speaking simply and performing miracles and then he tells his twelve disciples that they are also vested in His power to do such things and to go about the area helping the folk, irrespective of their station or caste, and spreading the Good News. But he specifically tells them to focus on the Jews. Not the Samaritans or the Gentiles. Clearly, he needs to set right those who know of God's Covenant and once again were straying.

Today, as we approach the end (hopefully) of Covid19 Lockdown, we are in a similar situation to the Jews of Jesus's time. Over the last 2000 years, we've known what the message of Jesus was to his followers and the peoples of the area and has been to all those professing the Christian faith since. But the Christian faith as we know it today has also been "adjusted, amended, interpreted etc" all probably with the best of intentions, just like the Jews did to Moses's Laws, so the Christianity today is not just the original, simple faith, that started off. Some would argue that's only logical necessity.

OK, so the world is a more complex place and the religion needed to change to meet the current situation..... Wouldn't that have been exactly the same logic and rationale that the scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees used to defend their version and its changes from the original???

People have had enforced on them over the past few month – and probably for good few more – a simpler lifestyle. It's not what we had been expecting nor what had been used to – nor what many would prefer for a variety of reasons – as we all resist change, remember. However, the changes were not done frivolously or without good reason.

If we hadn't taken these measures, many more would have died and more are still likely to. During this time, we've been brought to a simpler life, we've been made more conscious of our family and friends and supporting each other with respect, love, and kindness. Attributes of our society that if we're honest we becoming unfashionable or diluted in trying to handle the way our society had evolved.

What's happened, is that we've effectively – whether knowingly or out of simple necessity – returned to that fundamental tenet of Jesus's teaching "love thy neighbour as thyself" and there is nothing wrong in recognising and accepting this.

Perhaps more folk who were ambivalent or professed no faith at all might now recognise where this model for behaviour comes from? Particularly if we're not shy in telling them.

When people are rushing back to the way things were before and not thinking of those around them thus risking a second or third more waves of Covid19 for us all through what is, honestly, selfish behaviour, we should consider what is their fear of change that is making them this way and ask them why they don't love their neighbours ? and wouldn't they want us to continue to love them? It's only logical.

If we hold fast to this tenet of the faith Christ gave us to follow, we can move on to a new future that has a strong foundation, that may be different in many respects from the past, but has the potential for growth and be able to adapt to future change while still embodying the teaching of Jesus.

Surely, following the simple teaching of Jesus is not defying logic!