

“Jesus did not rise from the dead “ because he was God” but because he was fully human”.

A quote from Laurence Freeman. So Jesus is not leading us away from being human into some idealised ethereal state of being removed from where we are, here on this very material earth with all its resistance and encumbrances: tricky people, penetrating cold or heat, uninvited guests and diseases and so on – all the things one might wish to escape from, but he is teaching us how to become fully human in and through all of these difficult and not so difficult circumstances. He’s teaching us how to live in the world as we are -with all our own difficult and seemingly intractable characteristics -the good and bad of which we’re not entirely sure, all grist to the mill, material for resurrection. This may seem difficult to believe at times because we so readily label some people and some of our characteristics as good and others as bad, as enemies to be subjugated or avoided, or as traits in us to be commended and proud of; these are the things for which we are loved, for which other people must love us. But love is not so discriminating. Indeed the way Jesus presents it seems at times perverse to our way of thinking. And there perhaps is the rub, we think our way into and out of relationships before giving them a chance to do their work, to reveal themselves to us as instruments of Gods love, of Gods desire that is for us to know God as unconditional love.

This is to open ourselves up to the possibility that our judgements may be mistaken and to allow others the possibility of proving ourselves wrong. No one likes being in this position – least of all me. But somehow we must allow time to do its work, to allow the other person to reveal themselves, to know whether they too are on this same journey of becoming more fully human or are so resistant to change as to make this journey impossible. David gives Saul another chance. God ,as Jesus, gives us another chance

“Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge and you will not be judged yourselves, do not condemn and you will not be condemned yourselves, grant pardon and you will be pardoned”

This does not mean that one does not hide the drink if an alcoholic is present or even refrain from drinking oneself. “Do not lead your brother or sister into sin”. This does not mean failing to respond to an invasion, to standing up to a bully, to turning away a thief or a blagger at the door, but it does mean letting God, letting Christ, in, to organise one’s thoughts and feelings before mistaken prejudices have their way. This sort of loving wisdom also takes time - that learning to trust in another’s wisdom, that surrender of self-will which is a necessary suffering but is ultimately liberating – leading us to places and people we might never have imagined being at ease with, being in love with, had we been left to our own devices – and indeed to parts of ourselves we might have thought irredeemable but have become the very things for which and through which all those other irredeemable people begin to love us and find redemption.

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