Prayer Focus: March 2014

Moving Toward a Costly Future

‘As the time drew near for him to ascend to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. He sent messengers ahead to a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival. But the people of the village did not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to Jerusalem. When James and John saw this, they said to Jesus, “Lord, should we call down fire from heaven to burn them up?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. So they went on to another village.

As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, “I will follow you wherever you go”. But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head”. He said to another person, “Come, follow me”. The man agreed, but he said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father”.

But Jesus told him, “Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God”. Another said, “Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family”. But Jesus told him, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God”.


Reflection

Jesus ‘resolutely’ sets out for Jerusalem. On the way he deals with rejection from people whose ethnicity, cultural and religious differences set them apart from him. He also has to address the arrogance and misunderstanding of his travelling companions, the disciples. He responds to the challenges of three people who say they want to be his followers and yet are unwilling to face the cost of discipleship.

Jesus experiences all these difficulties, knowing that his ultimate personal sacrifice for the world would come in the very place that he was ‘resolutely’ heading toward.

What determination. What a costly journey.

Following Jesus has a cost. Do we resolutely walk towards costly action, or retreat from it, or try to reshape it to suit our level of comfort?
Prayer 1:
Lord, your word tells us that your grace is sufficient for us and your strength is made perfect in our weakness, yet we fear a lack of grace and try to be so strong personally. Help us to be confident that we do not journey through life alone, that your gracious presence is always with us. Help us to step out in your strength and learn repeatedly that our own personal weaknesses are not a deterrent to victorious living. May we resolutely move toward the challenges of life knowing that your grace and your strength are always with us.

Reflective Question: What has God called me to that I need to face resolutely?

Prayer 2:
Heavenly Father may everything I do begin with your inspiration, continue with your help and reach perfection under your guidance. As I resolutely set my face to the journey of life you have ordained for me, please guide my daily actions and help me to persevere with love and sincerity.

Reflective Question: How do I usually respond to opposition?

Prayer 3:
Lord, may we know that it is the journey itself that is important. Help us to discover more of your truth and divinity as we travel alone and in company with your people. Help us not to fear the demands of the journey or our fellow travellers, but rather find a breadth of grace and enjoyment in fellowship as we journey together. Lord, lead us beyond the comfortable, the mundane and the easy, to places of challenge that require implicit trust in the God we serve.

Reflective Question: What do we need to leave behind to be faithful disciples of Jesus?

Prayer 4: Prayer on the Theme of Journeying (from Faith and Worship - Christian Prayers and Resources)

Your life was a journey from the moment you were born. From birth to death. From Bethlehem's stable to Calvary's cross. How often we fail to understand, that the conclusion of your journey was inevitable, that you understood this from the very beginning, and yet still walked the path that was yours to take. By comparison

1 2 Corinthians 12:9
the many choices we make
in our life seem trivial,
the twists and turns we choose
are often taken on impulse,
with no clear comprehension of the outcome.
Thank you, Jesus.
Thank you that you loved humankind enough
to make that journey,
even as you felt the pain of rejection,
the pain of the lashes,
the pain of the nails,
the pain of the cross.

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**Reflective Meditation:**
Lord grant me the resolve to follow you for my whole life, wherever you may lead.