

## Stewardship Sunday 24 June, 2007

1 King 19: 1-4, 8–15a

Reading from Michael Leunig “The Curly Pyjama Letters”.

Dear Vasco,  
in response to your question “What is worth doing and what is worth having?” I would like to say simply this. It is worth doing nothing and having a rest; in spite of all the difficulty it may cause, you must rest Vasco – otherwise you will become RESTLESS!

I believe the world is sick with exhaustion and dying of restlessness. While it is true that periods of weariness help the spirit to grow, the prolonged, ongoing state of fatigue to which our world seems to be rapidly adapting is ultimately soul destroying as well as earth destroying. The ecology of evil flourishes and love cannot take root in this sad situation. Tiredness is one of your strongest, most noble and instructive feelings. It is an important aspect of our CONSCIENCE and must be heeded or else we will not survive. When you are tired you must HAVE that feeling and you must act upon it sensibly – you MUST rest like the trees and animals do.

Yet tiredness has become a matter of shame! This is a dangerous development. Tiredness has become the most suppressed feeling in the world. Everywhere we see people overcoming their exhaustion and pushing on with intensity – cultivating the great mass mania which all around is making life so hard and ugly – so cruel and meaningless – so utterly graceless – and being congratulated for overcoming it and pushing it deep down inside themselves as if it were a virtue to do this. And of course Vasco, you know what happens when such strong and natural feelings are denied – they turn into the most powerful and bitter poisons with dreadful consequences. We live in a world of these consequences and then wonder why we are so unhappy.

So I gently urge you Vasco, do as we do in Curly Flat – learn to curl up and rest – feel your noble tiredness – learn about it and make a generous place for it in your life and enjoyment will surely follow. I repeat: it’s worth doing nothing and having a rest.

yours sleepily,  
Mr. Curly xxx

In response to your question “**What is worth doing and what is worth having**”? I would like to say simply this: “It is worth **doing nothing and having a rest**”.

What counter cultural advice in this crazy rushing world, yet what wisdom for those who are exhausted.

What **is** worth doing and what is worth **having**? What do we **value**?

How do we spend our time and our money? **These** reflect our **values**.

Elijah, the great prophet has been in a mammoth contest with the prophets of the rain god Baal – and Elijah won . . . but all that excitement and victory evaporates when faced with Queen Jezebel's wrath.

He flees for his life –

After a huge moment in his career, he is exhausted, depleted, depressed – safe and hiding he is fed by God then urged to go on to Mt. Horeb/ Mt. Sinai – the place where Moses received the law – a holy place, a place of pilgrimage.

God asks him

“What are you doing here Elijah”?

What are you doing **here**?

Elijah is burnt out, terrified, showing the classic symptoms – he has no energy to face his tasks, nothing positive to say. He feels he is all alone. He just can't do it any more. So he has gone off on retreat, back to the place where his ancestor in faith, Moses – met God. He is desperate to find God, meaning, purpose again – Elijah in the womb tomb darkness of the cave seeks renewal, in encounter with God.

And God comes not in the classic ways of fire and wind, but in the “sound of sheer silence”, the still small voice. When all the noise and clamour have ceased – when the questioning, the doubting, the raging are done – God is there – in the silence . . . God is always there.

I know this stuff. I know burn out and tiredness and rage, I know depression, exhaustion and endless sleep – I know the point when all I can do is stop and turn to God, the ground of my being, and God asks, “What are you doing here”? And Vasco Pyjama asks “What is worth doing and what is worth having”?

You **know** God, and God says gently, forcefully “Get up and get on with it” and God also says, “I am with you” Elijah and we are not alone. Ironically when Elijah does go he finds support – others who are with him, and a colleague, Elisha. He finds seven thousand of the faithful who had not bowed to Baal. He has new resources.

And today on this Stewardship Sunday God asks **you**, “What are you **doing** here? What are you doing **here**”?

What is **your** place here? Are you burnt out too, shut in the darkness, resting, waiting, seeking the nourishment of God in communion, in word and prayer, in community? Are you barely surviving? Are you excited, enthusiastic, passionate, charged up, ready to act in Jesus name – to change the world or at least your little bit? Or are you somewhere in between, ready to make your small contribution to the jigsaw puzzle, the tapestry that is ministry at Holy Covenant, Cook.

In what silences do you hear God?

Where are the silences in our community – can you hear a word from God in them?

We live in a very fast moving world with little peace at times.

How can you / we offer a still place in peoples lives?

Where do you find still places in your own life?

“What is worth doing and what is worth having”?

“What are you doing here”? comes the voice out of silence . . .

2 Cor 9:6-11

St. Paul says:

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us.

### **Story about the purchase of my coat and the generosity of an artist**

Generosity begets generosity.

Generosity: able to give with freshness and newness and passion

What are you grateful for?

What gifts have you received?

Or are you open to receive?

What will you give in response to God’s generosity?

All contributions count, all together make up the whole.

I invite you to take a pen and some paper take time in the silence to reflect.

What am I doing here?

What is worth doing and what is worth having?

What am I willing to commit to God these next 12 months?

\$25 per week and children’s church, or cooking a casserole

\$50 per week and reading in church or cleaning

\$70 per week and being in church, attending, meditation.

\$40 per week and being on the prayer vine. . .

We heard of the stone soup last week . . . this week – when all contributed –  
What wonderful soup.

Write your commitment on the small piece of cloth – place it in the water – see it dissolve and contribute to the colour, the vibrancy of this place.

What is worth doing?

What is worth having?