

(For Monday, August 28, 2017) What will people say about your eccentric moments?

“Now Adonigha the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty me to run before him.” (1Kings 1:5, ESV)

We all have our eccentricate moments, when the more extreme characteristics of our nature come to the surface and are on display. These moments of our “wild side” may reveal themselves in the form of outlandish hats, or a weakness for a particular type of food, or the collection of unusual items (I for example am especially fond of anything having to do with turtles). I’ve noticed through the years that it is during these moments of excess when important aspects of someone’s character are often revealed. While most acts of eccentricity are harmless, those actions of abandon which exalt the self can be insightful barometers as to a person’s focus on egoism or lack of altruism.

What do your more eccentric characteristics reveal about you as a person?

(For Tuesday, August 29, 2017)? Where does the strength of our public acts lie?

“So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David’s mule and brought him to Gihon.” (1Kings 1:38, ESV)

It’s instructive to reflect on the people David chose, in order to preserve this vital moment in the history of Israel, when Solomon was anointed King. The three members of his inner circle are placed alongside his Cherethite and Pelethite soldiers. These mercenaries were most likely people from Crete (outsiders to the Nation of Israel) and descendants of the Philistines (a people David had defeated in battle on numerous occasions). Apparently, David has recognized the importance of diversity in preserving and commemorating this event in the Children of Israel’s history. It’s a sober and somber moment when Christians come to reflect upon the population of church congregations on Sunday morning. It turns out that in most cases, Sunday church services are the least integrated moments of our week, since most Christian congregations in this country tend to be decidedly monotone in race and ethnicity.

When will we learn as a people that our greatest strength in perpetuating our convictions and traditions lies in including the widest possible diversity in our public acts – especially our acts of public worship?

(For Wednesday, August 30, 2017) Where does your focus lie?

“With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!” (Ps.119:10, ESV)

The yearning quality of Psalm 119 is evident throughout. The writer is constantly extolling the value of God’s righteous instruction. Scholars have noted how words like “law,” “testimonies,” “precepts,” “statutes,” “commandments,” and “rules” occur throughout the psalm. But even amidst the beauty and intricacy of this poetry, there is a kind of wistful quality here; a feeling that the writer, while full-well acknowledging the value of God’s instruction, also tacitly admits his inability to completely fulfill God’s will for his life. Jesus’ words in Gethsemane come back to haunt us: *“the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”* (See Mt.26:41). The good news for the Christian lies in a new insight given to verse 6 in this psalm: *“Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.”*

Because the truth is, as long as you and I can keep our eyes fixed on the Cross, and the immensity of what Our Lord accomplished for us there, there is truly neither shame nor condemnation!

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(For Thursday, August 31, 2017) How will you shape history today?

“Say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”” (Mk.14:14, ESV)

There are so many instances in the Gospels where people do seemingly insignificant things which end up being huge accomplishments for the salvation of human-kind. This is surely one of them. Can you imagine what might have happened if the owner of the house where the Upper Room was located had denied entry to Jesus and his twelve friends? The entire course of human history may very well have been altered. You and I see this world and the actions of Our Lord in it “through a glass darkly,” as Paul said. We have only a very limited and totally incomplete view of what is actually transpiring in our world at any given moment in the history of the universe. And even seemingly inconsequential acts of mundane generosity can actually mean the difference of joy or pain for those around us.

What “random act of kindness” will you do today that will change the world for someone?

(For Friday, September 1, 2017) Do you comprehend the encompassing wideness of his mercy?

“Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.” (Mk.14:42, ESV)

We often focus on the divinity of Jesus. But it is a tremendous mistake to lose sight of his humanity as well. This identification of Judas Iscariot as the betrayer, and the intense wrestling-match with himself that has just happened in Gethsemane clearly portray the immense pain Jesus was suffering, not because of his divine person but because he was also “very man” as well as “very God.” The original wisdom of the early church that Jesus “Could not save what he did not first put on,” means that you and I worship a God who can intimately identify with our pain and anxiety, because he has already suffered so much of it on his own person. Yes, he has ascended on high to sit at God’s right hand. But what makes this glorification so powerful for you and me is that he first transcended the barrier between heaven and earth by humbling himself in the form of frail, human flesh.

Is there really any problem you can think of to which Jesus can’t relate?

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