

Sermon – After he had dismissed the crowds

In this Gospel there is a lot of drama.

In this gospel there are events, miracles, relationships.

It begins however

With Jesus dismissing a crowd going up alone to a silent place to pray

Those of faith not only see Christ Jesus as their idol

Those of faith see Christ as a pattern of behaviour,

An outline of practice by which personal fulfilment is achieved.

This is not necessarily recognised in the drama

In the miracles

Even the relationships

But in the humility of practice

To be a Christian is to model my life upon the person and nature of Christ Jesus

After he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

So what do we mean by pray

After he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

It is not simply petition

A series of requests

Make me well again

Protect my son

Comfort my daughter

It is more dangerous than just asking

It is closer to listening

Listening to God

Listening to me

To avoid prayer I can of course panic
Panic is a great way to avoid what is needed
Blocking the way with potential consequences
Seeing through a prism of disaster
Acting in a way that excites the crisis
Dashing physically and mentally around and around the same place
When I am in the presence of God I can present my panic
In the context of prayer the consequences, are left, to be lived, tomorrow
Seeing with faith can even allow the acceptance of disaster
Leading to actions based upon meditation, and not simply reaction
Turning from this place, until I can arrive at the place, where I actually am

To avoid prayer I can of course deny
Denial is a great way to avoid what is needed
Blocking any progress by a means of self-deception
Seeing selectively that which I will allow as truth
Acting out the preservation of my life as untruth
Moving physically and mentally only in the area of perceived comfort
When in the presence of God I can present my denial
Gaining the courage to question my false security
Seeing that which is outside my comfort
Acting out the alternatives
Moving mentally and potentially physically into actual reality
Slowly, Slowly, Slowly.

To avoid prayer I can of course give up, accept fatalism.
Pessimism will excuse me from the effort needed
Blocking any progress by means of hopelessness
Seeing the glass half empty and wasting its contents
Acting out an ever reducing series of limited alternatives
Moving mentally and physically away from the creative liberation of God
When in the presence of God I can present this lack of faith, this desolation
The gospel eternally calls me to walk upon the water
To live beyond my fear and cry out as the waves crash
Seeing the hand of God and reaching out for it
Acting with the uncertainty and courage of reality
Moving mentally and physically with Christ through pain and resurrection

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An outline of practice by which personal fulfilment is achieved.

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In the miracles
Even the relationships
But in the humility of practice
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