

Meditation on Luke 12:32-48

Voice of Peter some years into his mission.

It was the usual sort of day: Jesus, the twelve of us, and a crowd of local people come to hear what he had to say. He'd built up quite a reputation. I loved him: I loved him because he was so different, so special, and he gave us hope. I wasn't quite sure what the hope was for, but it was definitely there.

But that day, he started talking about giving things up - - selling everything and giving the money to the have-nots. That's why I asked the question: was he talking to us, the twelve of us, or to the crowd. After all, we had given everything, or at least risked it. I'd left my wife and the children, and my mother-in-law- not that pined for her. And then there was the business. How were they managing without me? Were the catches OK? It takes skill to make a living from fishing, skill I learned as a boy from my dad. And what about the selling. Were they getting a good price for the fish? There's no point spending all night in the boat and then letting some rogue take the catch off you for next to nothing. I hadn't been home for months, but I thought about it every day, and I worried.

So, what was he getting at? was he talking to the crowd, or was he asking us to give even more? He turned and looked at me. It was a look that said

'Peter, I know you, I know that you think, I know what you fear, and I know who you really are.

It was then that I realised, that he meant something more than the sort of giving I'd been thinking of. It was going to be giving of a different type, and on a different scale. But he was going to give me something that, deep down, I'd missed, but hadn't put into words, even to myself. I was going to be the leader. I'd missed that- being in charge, I mean. Missed it a lot. Because, since dad died, that's what I've been: head of the business, and of the family. Maybe that's why I worried about home so much: were they Ok, and was the business doing well?

But the new being in charge was going to have a price. I was going to be responsible to God for how I used it. It wasn't just a matter of the family behaving and the business bringing in money. This was going to be complicated, and involve people outside the family.

And it has been. We've spread Jesus' message of love, and people have believed us. Thousands of them, in Israel and beyond. And I've played that part of leading. Everyone looks to me, especially when there are fallings-out. And I've always tried to find a solution that meant we stayed united, the way he wanted us to be. It hasn't been easy, and I don't suppose I've always succeeded. But I've tried. And above all, I've tried to love them: every one of his followers, old and new, I've tried to love. I only hope I've loved them enough.

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