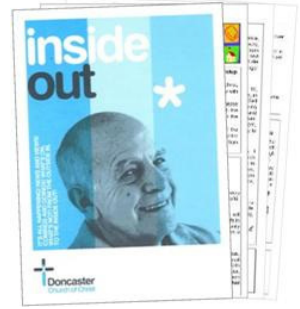


Weekly Thought

Article from Doncaster Church of Christ's
weekly newsletter 'Inside Out'



12th February 2012
Kaye Reid

Thomas Jefferson in his Presidential inauguration address in 1801 said "I...declare a sincere consciousness that the task is above my talents, and that I approach it with those anxious and awful presentiments which the greatness of the charge and the weakness of my powers so justly inspire." He went on to say "I shrink from the contemplation, and humble myself before the magnitude of the undertaking."

When I read this I was taken aback and delighted by his honesty and humility, and with the generosity of spirit with which he later affirms his dependency upon the wisdom of those around him. This is not the kind of Presidential talk that we are accustomed to hearing.

What do we think humility looks like? If we are to be humble, to walk humbly with God, what should we do, what shouldn't we do?

Jefferson reflects a type of humility in recognizing and acknowledging that the task before him is daunting and beyond what he thinks he is capable of. In some cases this could be an accurate self reflection, at other times, a person may be unduly underrating their capacity.

In Philippians 2 in the 'hymn to Christ' Jesus is described as the one who was capable, who did have the power, the divinity, but nevertheless chose, in obedience to God's will, to empty Himself and experience humanity in the form of a slave. That is to serve. He did not come in the glory that is expected of a King, let alone God, but challenged and turned upside down our social and cultural ideas about what greatness is.

Do we see this as just the way that Jesus lived, or do we feel that to follow Jesus also means to 'take on the form of a slave' ourselves?

Paul, the writer of Philippians, appeals to them, and us, to make his joy complete by having the same mind as Christ in your relationships, by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. He warns them, and us, from acting out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but encourages instead, in humility, that we look to the interests of others.

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." (Phil 2: 12-13)

Kaye