

Growing in confidence

Notes on the Bible readings

- Jesus' encounter with some seemingly sympathetic Pharisees confirms that he must be 'on his way' (v.33) and will not be turned from the path before him. There isn't a flicker of the fear of Gethsemane, but instead a firm resolve to continue towards Jerusalem, the city that kills prophets. The stance of Jerusalem's religious leaders is entrenched, so they place themselves firmly on the road to ruin, both cosmic (Philippians 3.19) and literal (v.35). The destruction of the Temple in AD 70 had happened by the time Luke was writing.

- Jesus uses a rare female image in describing himself as a mother hen facing off Herod the fox (Luke 13.34). But this hen and her chicks cannot be snatched away – the power of heaven is behind them. The fox is only a threat when the chicks are outside the security of the hen's wings, but people can choose or reject heavenly protection.

- The truth of Psalm 27 is written in the very nature of Jesus – heaven is his true home and his identity isn't something that can be distorted by any outside force, no matter how pressured or deadly. Paul reminds us that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3.20). He prompts us to 'stand firm in the Lord' (4.1) when we find ourselves under pressure, and allow our identity in Christ and heavenly values to affect our behaviour now, so that 'on our way' we may fulfil God's kingdom purposes.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ When have you felt pressurised to make a decision?
- ▶ How did you work out what to do?
- ▶ Where is God in that process?



A prayer for patience

Loving God, we are sorry that sometimes pressure overcomes us and we make wrong decisions. We know that we should wait on you, and be guided by you, but we rush in headlong without thinking of the consequences for ourselves or for others.

Forgive us, and help us to be patient with you, to be guided by you, and to be obedient to you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

A prayer for others

We pray for all who work in stressful situations, that they may have peace to enable them to make wise decisions. We hold before you especially those who work in the health service, whose decisions can mean life or death. We remember those faced with the stress caused by poverty – for whom there is a constant fear that there will not be enough, and every spending decision is a challenge. We bring to you those around the world who do not have immediate access to health care and clean water, who take risky actions because it is easier than doing what is safe – or it is the only option. We ask that you will give wisdom to those who make the decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of others – including politicians and all in authority. May they have vision and compassion to act in ways that are beneficial to all. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

A personal prayer

*I am God's child. God loves me.
God will care for me – always.
Thank you, God. Amen.*

For reflection and comment linking this week's Bible reading to the news, current issues and events, go to www.rootsontheweb.com and click on PostScript.



Live your faith

Pray for three people who are facing difficult situations right now – if appropriate, find an opportunity to let each of them know that they are a 'child of God'.