

Cohabiting with Jesus?

Genesis 15^{1-12,17-18}; Psalm 27; Philippians 3¹⁷⁻⁴1; Luke 13^{31-end}

*One thing I asked of the Lord and that alone I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. [Psalm 27⁴]*

I confess that I really don't like living overnight with friends or family. I would rather spend money on a B&B or an hotel than worry about how you fit in with the morning routines or forcing conversation over a breakfast table when everyone would rather just emerge silently into the day assisted by caffeine.

That sense of belonging is in most of our readings for today:

- ✦ Abram has taken the risk of leaving the security of the life he knew - God had promised him descendants and land. **He believed the Lord and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.** The fact that God says to Abram, **do not be afraid**, must mean that he was anxious about God's promises. In etc end, with the enacting of the covenant in the Lord passing between the halves of the animals for sacrifice, **the Lord made a covenant with Abram** and they had a place to be.
- ✦ The Psalmist is also concerned to have a place to be: **One thing I asked of the Lord and that alone I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.** This was to him the anchor of his being - such was his confidence in God that **though my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.** This wasn't just future hope but he says, **I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.**
- ✦ Paul also has that sense of belonging - **But our citizenship is in heaven.** We look around us and we see those who don't share our faith and know **that their end is destruction; their god is their belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.** It is Jesus that transforms us from **humiliation to glory.**

It is therefore shocking - it is meant to be shocking - that Jesus does not belong.

Jerusalem is important in God's plan - did you notice at the end of v.32 and the beginning v.33 that it is mentioned three times in a row (in the Greek as well as the English translations) - **Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Jerusalem.**

Jesus says of that city **How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing.** And this rejection seems to be in character with that city: **the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.** The capital of faith seems incapable of recognising what is important.

Luke, in these verses, is making his clearest statement of the road that will inevitably end up in Jerusalem and in the death of Jesus. It is the entry into Jerusalem that Jesus points forward to: **you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'**

It is one thing to accept that faith gives us a sort of heavenly landlord - it is quite another to move in together!

I suppose that we might quite like the idea of cohabiting with Jesus - in the no-strings, no commitment relationship.

Jesus cannot be just a friend-with-benefits - it is all or nothing!

Now just imagine (following the teaching in John 14) that in heaven you have an ensuite room, so no need to worry about the practicalities of staying-over, and that you can have breakfast delivered to your room, so no need to be sociable too early. Would you belong in heaven? Would you fit in?