



WORKTALK WEEKLY

22 JUNE 2009

This is the tenth piece in a mini series on daily disciplines (DD)

DD 10 - Readiness

Most days just come and go. You have to do some things and you choose to do others. Some days become memorable whilst they are happening due to a measure of success or the arrival of a struggle. But even these memories fade.

Occasionally, and it is occasionally, something happens which crashes into your day and interrupts the routine so dramatically that the day becomes engraved in the metal of your mind.

The interruption could be spectacularly positive in the form of an unexpected windfall or a major breakthrough. Alternatively the invasion can be shocking or disturbing. This could be the reception of a medical test result with serious implications, or the news of the death of a friend or relative.

When the unthinkable occurs, it can act as a spiritual wake-up call causing you to examine yourself and circumstances with heightened thoroughness to check the foundations of your life. Generally you don't, or can't live with this level of awareness, but on such occasions you are forced to reflect.

And the reflection is often about your own mortality. You hear people say things like 'well that makes everything else just seem trivial' or 'in the light of that news it doesn't really matter does it?' Some people, on hearing terminal news, testify that, paradoxically, they start to feel more alive even in the face of the closing of life.

Not so long ago, whilst I was out of my home country, in a place where they drive on the other side of the road, I was about to step out, looking the wrong way, when I suddenly turned my head as a car sped past me at high speed. In that moment I was within a heartbeat of being no more.

Whatever the circumstances, news or reaction, the issue that emerges is one of readiness. The question raised is 'am I ready?' The question is not 'can I get ready?' or 'will I be ready?' but 'am I ready?' The reason that this is the question is because some types of invasion of your day (such as the arrival of a high speed car) don't come with the luxury of a lead time. One day it will be your last and none of us knows exactly which one it will be.

Now the discipline I am beginning to describe is not morbid or gloomy. It is not a syndrome of dread or doom, it is the satisfying state of the person who knows he or she has packed everything for the journey, covered all the aspects of an event, prepared completely for an exam or knows that all possible imponderables in a project have been covered in the planning.

Whilst you would find it rather intense to tune up your awareness to the levels related to the reception of difficult news all the time, it is wise to ask at least once a day 'am I ready?'

Here again, the words of our Lord from the cross will help us learn to be ready for our 'it is finished' moment. Readiness will include constantly engaging with questions such as 'have I any outstanding unforgiveness, poisoned relationships or unspoken gritudes?' 'Have I loved and lived as I should?' 'Have I made my stand, been myself and honoured all that I should?' Each one of these questions finds its answer in the sentences from the cross. But

the issue is more to do with the cross itself. The cross causes us to ask 'am I placing my trust entirely in the work of the Carpenter who paid all the fees, covered all my faults and sacrificed Himself so fully that there is nothing more I can do to qualify myself for Paradise?'

If you know you are putting your faith in the dying man who conquered death, staying focused only on His achievements and trusting only in His promise - you are ready.

So when it happens - the unthinkable, the invasion, the desolate dawn of terminal realization, you need not fear. The voice in the dark is the one you have known all along saying 'welcome'.

Such is the big issue resolution. The point of this piece is to provoke you to ask the question 'am I ready?' on a daily basis. Not because you cease to be ready by not asking it - this discipline is to remind yourself of the sweet state of readiness even if you are faced with a bitter cup.

Then there is a calm, a peace, and a quiet confidence that what you have lived for, you die by and it will be enough. In the end you can be ready because the One you follow was also ready, drank the cup and paved the path. Walk on.

Work Well
Geoff Shattock

This piece is dedicated to the memory of my nephew Matthew Powell who passed away unexpectedly on 24th May 2009 aged 25.

'Father into your hands we commit his spirit'.

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BIBLE SECTION

James 4:13-16

13Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." 16As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

Hebrews 3:13

3But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness

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