

'Learn from me'

Notes on the Bible readings

- Zechariah gives examples of the expectations that the people of Israel had about the Messiah: someone coming as a powerful king. What they got instead was John the Baptist and Jesus. John had a strange ascetic lifestyle and Jesus' lifestyle involved having parties with 'sinners'. Neither of them fitted the expectation of the coming king.
- In Matthew's Gospel, we see Jesus mock those who are 'wise', as he suggests that their longing for wisdom blinds them to what God is really doing. It is in fact vulnerable and humble children who are most likely to be in tune with God. Jesus also uses the metaphor of a yoke. A yoke can be a way of bearing a 'burden', but it is also a way of connecting two animals as they are 'yoked' together. So, the image of sharing a yoke with Jesus suggests being paired and guided by him as well as him offering to help bear our burdens.
- Perhaps a burden that the people were carrying was the missed expectations about the Messiah; we too may still need to reassess our expectations of who Jesus is and what he is able to do, to come to him and learn from him.

How does God see us?

Listen to Phil Wickham's 'Till I found you', available on YouTube. As you listen, consider the way that God confounds our expectations and writes, and rewrites, our stories.

Questions for reflection

- ▶ What can we learn from this image?
- ▶ How might we help people who carry heavy burdens?
- ▶ What does 'my yoke is easy... my burden is light' mean to you?



A reflective prayer

*Lord, sometimes I feel as if I'm on a fast train.
Life rushes by and I don't have time to pause.
Lord, I want to take time to see the view
that your wisdom, through Jesus, gives me;
to come to you in prayer,
expecting far more than I could ever believe possible.
Bless me with your presence, Lord.
Amen.*

A prayer for others

We pray for all in authority, that they will be respectfully conscious of the weight on their shoulders, and that they will act responsibly for the people they serve. We pray for them in their personal lives, with the worries and cares that only they see. We pray for our friends, family, colleagues. We pray that as we walk alongside them, you will use us to bring them close to you, and they will learn of your love, O Lord.

We pray that we might be sensitive to the needs of those around us – the people we see every day, perhaps as fleetingly as at the shops, or in the bus queue. We have no idea what burdens they are carrying, or if they need a kind word from you that only we can give. We pray that we will see the positive in people, even when it's hard, and reach out to encourage them. Amen.

A personal prayer

*Lord, you know how weary
and bowed down I feel sometimes.
I claim your rest for my soul.
I come to you in my emptiness
and cry to you for your fullness.
Rescue me and fill me, Lord. Amen.*

Live your faith

Write a list of the wonderful things you see in a friend and send the list to them.