

Learning Jesus

A Lenten reflection: Week 2

For freedom Christ has set us free.

Galatians 5:1

Jesus was uniquely free. He created a space within himself in order to be available for every encounter. This is the source of his authority and attractiveness. Learning Jesus means being brave enough to resist, in our loneliness for example, calling someone up, going shopping, taking a drug, turning on the TV, or going to bed. Instead of fleeing the experience - choosing an illusory freedom - we choose to go down into it, and there, gradually, notice another Presence there, silent, good, peaceful. Here genuine freedom awaits us.

When Christians are described as followers of Jesus, it is important to be clear that we follow, not the Jesus of history, not just a set of teachings, but someone who is our contemporary, and who, because of the resurrection, is alive.

Harry Williams said that "I cannot properly say 'I believe' unless it's another way of saying 'I am'". Following or experiencing Jesus, learning Jesus, is a deeply and personally involving enterprise.

*How I **approach** Jesus is crucial to my learning or experiencing him. I need to be open, trusting and receptive. I need to be patient, to take time for silent reflection, and to be prepared to suffer as I open myself to the challenges and changes that new truths bring. I recognize too that learning Jesus happens in the company of others, my contemporaries in the community of faith, across the ages.*

*In this process I begin to **appreciate** his truth, his way- not as immutable propositions to believe- but as a way of being in the world that leads to life, peace, joy, freedom, compassion and hope. As this way becomes increasingly attractive, I begin to realize that it is what I most deeply want.*

*I find courage then, as I learn more and more of Jesus, to **appropriate** not just what he stands for but who he is. In this way I begin to put into practice his way of being. Jesus becomes my way of living and relating.*

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