

Reflection for 16th October 2022 – St Luke

Sir. 38:6-10,12-14

2 Timothy. 4: 5-13

Like 10: 1-9

If, like me, you cannot immediately place Sir, apart from The Apocrypha, I learnt that it was originally written in Hebrew and translated by the author's great grandson in 132B.C

It is part of the Wisdom literature and called "The wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach, and called Ecclesiasticus, but is known as Sir to differentiate it from Ecclesiastes.

It is a teaching book to guide young men how to live honourably as some were being tempted to drift away from their ancestral traditions. It has an old-fashioned attraction because of its middle-class piety and seeks to show that faithfulness to the Law and its practices and allows a man to gain true wisdom. It includes treating all equally, helping those in trouble, caring for orphans etc. Also, to guard against gossip and all that is harmful.

It says that Drs are given the gift of healing from God and should be respected for their skills. God has given them the knowledge to use the remedies of the plants for healing and must be respected for their knowledge and follow their advice. Only fools will reject their help. It is a calling which God gives to some for the benefit of others. It gives advice about daily life, but I am not so sure about "A woman will accept any husband" (36:v.21)

Paul's letter to Timothy is as applicable to Christian communities today as it was then – keep the truth and defend the faith and spread the Gospel.

Timothy appears to play a small part in spreading the faith, we don't hear of him like some others, no "Timothy did" "Timothy said.... ", he usually accompanies some-one else more well-known (Paul, Luke), BUT..... by reading I found he worked quietly, obediently, faithfully, prayerfully and obediently in his calling to preach the Good news to all.

Being the son of a Greek father and Jewish mother, he was only ½ Jewish and this caused problems. He was not allowed to go into the Synagogue, and some refused to believe that he was Jewish, so Paul circumcised him and he was accepted as a true Jew.

He joined Paul at Lystra and became one of Paul and Luke's closest companion, an invaluable and faithful friend. He was sent to witness in several towns/cities (Troas, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus) sometimes with Luke sometimes alone and stayed in some places for a year or more. Sometimes he had to report on the progress of the

work in that place or to counter false allegations and witnesses that were hindering the work of spreading the Gospel.

It was essential that the gospel was heard and passed onto the next generation.

When Paul was in prison and expecting to die, he sent some followers off on their mission, while others deserted him and only Luke was with him, He wrote to Timothy asking him to come and see him and bring a warm cloak, books and paper knowing that Timothy would come. I wonder who I would ask in that situation, who would definitely come regardless of any danger, or would I be that faithful friend especially if I ran the risk of being arrested?

Timothy was a true friend, obedient, faithful to his mission of spreading the Good News. A truly good and faithful friend.

Luke, we know was a physician, evangelist, and Saint. He was an educated Greek and some thought that maybe he was a ship's doctor, a freed slave of Theophilus (would a slave have the credentials for a physician?) or a painter. Maybe he met Paul when he treated him when he was ill. Like other followers he never met Jesus so had to learn from others, including some who had.

Luke's Gospel is addressed to the educated Gentile world showing that Christianity is NOT an obscure, disruptive Jewish sect but potentially a world religion of peace. He accompanies Paul, and sometimes Timothy on their journeys witnessing and preaching that Jesus is the only Lord and followers must act like Him. They must pray, treat everyone as equals regardless of nationality of religion just as Jesus had done. He cared for all, the poor (widow) the outcasts of society (lepers), even the Romans who came asking for healing. He did not have to meet the patient - He knew they needed healing and what was in their heart –even the woman touching His cloak, knowing her needs and faith felt the healing power go from Him.

Luke gives women a prominent place, when the status of women was very low, and they were ignored He even mentions the women who stayed at the cross when most of the men had fled in fear and their going to the tomb finding it empty and seeing the angel.

He learnt about Jesus from Paul and others he met and worked with. He writes about the birth of Jesus was it to show that He was God's Son from the very beginning and that he was not some jumped up self-proclaiming "messiah" ? He mentions the shepherds -the lowest of the low - as the first visitors to see the baby, (not kings or those of importance.) thus giving the poor a place in His ministry. Did he get this from Mary herself?

He records the small things Jesus did – the Widow and her mite. Nothing was too small to show anyone who was truly faithful.

He records healing on the Sabbath, which was strictly forbidden by Law, Epileptic son (9:37-42) Legion (8:26-36) Lepers (17:11-19) for example.

He writes tenderly of the Passion, omitting the most distressing events – the flogging, nailing to the cross, just “They crucified Him” and ending with the Evening prayer known to all Jews “Into your hands I commend my Spirit”.

Only Luke records the sending out of the 72. He knew the urgency of their work – so much to do and so little time. If the people they met refused to listen and reject the message they brought, then move on. Don’t waste time, some did not want peace but war against the Romans..

Luke remained faithful to the work and to Paul. When Paul is sure he is going to die, he sends some off to spread the good news, but others deserted for fear of being arrested and Paul writes to Timothy saying, “only Luke is here” and asks him to bring a warm cloak, books and paper. What faithfulness he and Timothy show when others deserted Paul. BOTH WERE GOOD and FAITHFUL SERVANTS.