

Isaiah 40.12-17

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure,
and weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance?
Who has directed the spirit of the LORD,
or as his counsellor has instructed him?
Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice?
Who taught him knowledge,
and showed him the way of understanding?
Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
and are accounted as dust on the scales;
see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.
Lebanon would not provide fuel enough,
nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering.
All the nations are as nothing before him;
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

Psalm 8

O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

2 Corinthians 13.11-end

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Matthew 28.16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

When thinking about a Gospel passage we often take the passage in its entirety. The task of the commentator however is to take a single line or even word and from that understand some of the nuances and subtleties involved. Reading Trinity Sunday's Gospel reading I was struck by one line. I have lifted and redacted this commentary in the hope that it may give us greater depth. Doubt is something that perhaps many of us have danced with during the lockdown. This is not something unique to us living through a pandemic but also to those initial disciples who lived alongside Jesus.

This is the first time in this Gospel that we find the disciples together since Jesus was arrested and the disciples deserted him (26:56). Only Mary Magdalene and the other Mary have seen the risen Christ. We can only guess at the disciples' state of mind as they proceed toward the mountain, but we know what happens when they finally see Jesus—**“they bowed down to him, but some doubted”** (*distazo*).

Distazo has as its root *dis*, which means “twice” or “two ways.” *Distazo* can mean “hesitate.” The picture that comes to mind is Robert Frost's poem, “The Road Not Taken.” In that poem, a traveller comes to a fork in the road, and hesitates, knowing that his choice will make all the difference, but not knowing which fork would be the better choice. That is the experience of these eleven disciples when they see Jesus. They want to believe—and they do believe—but they are torn. Knowing that Jesus died, they hesitate to believe their eyes when see him alive again.

We should not be surprised at either reaction—worship (bowing down) or doubt/hesitation. It is certainly fitting that the disciples should worship Jesus. They know that he was executed and buried. They know that Good Friday appeared to be the end. But now they see Jesus alive again,

confirming beyond doubt that he is the Messiah. They see with their own eyes that their teacher is Lord of life, exercising power even over death.

But we can also understand why some would doubt/hesitate. Nothing in their experience has prepared them for what they are seeing, except the resurrection of Lazarus, which is not reported in this Gospel (see John 11). Earlier, Jesus observed, **“If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead”** (Luke 16:31). Now Jesus' own disciples experience a tinge of doubt as they see Jesus who was raised from the dead.

We are tempted to criticize the disciples for doubting, but we should not imagine that we would have done better. Jesus does not rebuke the disciples. He understands their doubt, but speaks to their faith. He understands their frailty, but calls them to carry on his work. How wonderful! Jesus chose to do his work through the original less-than-perfect disciples, so we can be confident that he can do the same through us.

The disciples will grow into the role that Jesus gives them. While their conduct in the book of Acts is hardly flawless, they will press ahead in the face of great opposition. They will sow seeds that will take root—multiply—waft across oceans on winds of faith. Jesus' choice of ordinary people to carry out an extraordinary mission is fully in keeping with God's work throughout history. God chose the young lad, David, instead of one of his strapping brothers. God sent most of Gideon's army home before sending the rest into battle. To God, our ability is less important than our availability. Our ability can even get in the way if it obscures God's role in our achievement.