



Fit for purpose – week 3

What is your drive?

w/c 5 December 2021

"A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows." (Francis of Assisi)

Being 'driven' doesn't generally get a good press these days. It carries associations of narrow-mindedness and obsession – giving up the fullness of life to pursue a narrow (perhaps selfish) end. The question for us then is how we can rescue the positive aspects of this as we seek to be 'all for Jesus' while keeping close the promise that Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness.

Read Psalm 32

The psalm falls into five parts in all though with two main sections. Between the opening and closing exultations there are three elements introduced by the words: *When*, *Then* and *Therefore*. David first looks back to his earlier distress and then focuses on the future as he considers how God will guide him on the right path. How do we balance this looking back and looking forward with the need to actually live in the present?

In his first letter, John put this idea into even simpler terms: *"We love because he first loved us."* (1 John 4:19). Our driver therefore must be love – God's love which causes us to love both him and those around us. If we focus in a little closer, we can pick up Paul's thought that there are *"good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Ephesians 2:10). How do we discern what it is that God has prepared for us; those opportunities that are intended for us and us alone?

James, when writing to the early church, was very clear that our relationship with God comes with consequences – *"faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."* (James 2:17). He, I am sure with his understanding of the Old Testament prophets, would have a clear idea of the sort of action God would be expecting of us – see Isaiah 1:17, Amos 5:24 or Micah 6:8 for some well-known examples of this. How do we translate these thoughts into our own day to day lives?

Read Ephesians 5. 8-20

Paul here (v10) says that our drive must be to *"find out what pleases the Lord"* – and then presumably to do it. In his second letter to the Corinthians (6:1) he had described believers as being God's fellow workers – there is a need therefore to find out where God is already at work (and join in). How do we discover where God is already active in and around our lives?

In verse 11 Paul seems to envisage a degree of separation between believers and the evil in the world around – how do we engage with the world while ensuring we are separate in the way this verse envisages? Jesus likened our ministry to light and salt – one acting a distance, the other intimately connected. How do these images help you understand Paul's teaching here?

How do we make the most of every opportunity without spending so much time looking out for that special '*opportunity*' that we miss the everyday interactions that should shape our Christian walk?

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." (Martin Luther King, Jr.)