

Thought for the Day: Friday 31 July 2020 from Gill Griggs

Readings: 1 Samuel 13:5-18; Luke 22:63-end

Have you heard of Wang Zhiming? - a Chinese pastor who is portrayed in a statue on the West Front of Westminster Abbey. In the days of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution, Wang witnessed openly and clearly to the Christian faith, and he did so with grace and dignity. For this he gave his life, joining many others who have been martyred for their faith in recent years. In this way he was a brave follower of his Master.

Luke's Gospel makes it clear that the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, longed to get rid of Jesus. They taunted him in the way in which many others have been taunted and bullied, not only in the guardroom but in Board rooms, Care Homes, schools, and other places. The persecutors become the very antithesis of the Kingdom of God and its values.

Tom Wright, who wrote a commentary on Luke's Gospel, suggests that people forget that every single person they deal with, is a beautiful, fragile reflection of the Creator God, to be respected and cherished. 'Luke leads our eyes to the foot of the Cross; he means us to feel not just sorrow and pity, but shame'.

R.S.Thomas, the Welsh clergyman poet, wrote a poem called 'The Kingdom of God'; this may give us pause for thought.

The Kingdom

**It's a long way off but inside it
There are quite different things going on:
Festivals at which the poor man
Is king and the consumptive is
Healed; mirrors in which the blind look
At themselves and love looks at them
Back; and industry is for mending
The bent bones and the minds fractured
By life. It's a long way off, but to get
There takes no time and admission
Is free, if you will purge yourself
Of desire, and present yourself with
Your need only and the simple offering
Of your faith, green as a leaf.**