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What will a woman do if she has ten silver coins and loses one of them? Luke 14:8

This story of a woman expensively putting lights on and sweeping a room to find a lost coin has evoked many responses in the Churches I have been to recently; the coin is the lost Sunday School; a lost generation; lost folk from Church who have not been seen for a while; families; youth clubs. I have learnt a great deal through this process of sharing this story and this story has spoken powerfully to me. What if, to take this out of a Church context, this was personal and each coin was a person.

On October 4th my daughter, Hannah, marries (has married) Dr. Josh. A happy occasion for us all, making our families more complete and bigger in the process. Dr. Josh's dad came from India many years ago and has dedicated his life to the NHS. Some current rhetoric around could imply that he will be 'sent back', presumably to India. This would be a 'lost coin' in our family. Could his son, our son-in-law, be not welcomed and if so, where would he be sent 'back to'? He is born and bred in Nottingham, yet who knows and that would definitely be a 'lost coin.'

A colleague with a growing Church in this District has anxieties about his visa and his families potential right to stay in the UK. If he was 'sent back' I would lose another 'coin.'

A friend, whose grandfather, with an amazingly heroic story, fled Nazi persecution from Poland posed the question the other day; am I an immigrant? Mum was Polish and came as a little girl. "Could I be sent back to Poland in the future?" She asked the other day. Another 'coin' potentially lost.

My daughter is ginger. About 1.6% of the human population are ginger. Very much a minority. It is said that the average north European has about 2.2% Neanderthal DNA in them but those with the 'ginger gene' have about 2.6% Neanderthal DNA in them. Could she be deported to the Neander valley in Germany? Farfetched, yet no one expected Auschwitz did they.

Contemporary of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran Pastor, Martin Niemöller, warned us 80 years ago: 'First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.'

This story of a woman losing a coin has become, for me, a story about complacency. I'm okay I have 9 coins; I'm okay I've got a roof over my head and a nice car; I'm okay I still have Church, yes, it's a lot smaller but it will see me out. Her diligence, her desire to find what was lost, her hard work was rewarded. She didn't succumb to complacency.

What we see with half-mast St. George flags; what we hear in falseness and demonisation; the dehumanising of 'immigrants' and 'refugees' language that incites violence and divides communities. If we ignore this, becoming *complacent*, who knows what the future holds. Gaza could well be Grimsby one day.

The Methodist Church, following the Way of Jesus, seeks justice, equality for all, transformed communities and lives where all are welcomed and welcome. We seek to be inclusive of all, regardless of politics, race, gender or sexuality. We are called to heal the lame and feed the hungry. We are asked to act justly, love mercy and stand up for the voiceless, the refugee, the disadvantaged, the poor. Each person in our lives is precious to God, as well as to us, and each encounter with others has a meaning and purpose well beyond our imagination.

At Frodsham Methodist Church there has been engagement with the Local Council asking 'what can we do in the face of all this animosity?' There are no easy answers coming back; but, let us not let this force us into inaction and complacency. Let us find ways to wrestle with these challenges and for our local communities know that Jesus, the refugee who fled persecution in his country, is there for everyone with his arms held wide embracing the whole world.

For when the woman found her coin, she invited all her neighbours to a party and that shared rejoicing brings people, communities, society together that we all know that goodness will win out when we stand together.

Gordon