

Reflections Questions for Individuals and Small Groups

Stronger Faith for Today: Growing Resilient Disciples #2

“In a Complex and Anxious Age, Develop the Muscles of Cultural Discernment”

Martin Macaulay 23 August, 2020

1. What are some of the things you think about when you think of our “culture”? Consider both surface issues like the food we eat, the music we listen to, the language we speak... and some of the deeper issues and ways of thinking that make up our culture (e.g. individualism).
2. Are there any ways you feel culture or “the world” is trying to “push you into its mould”?

Read Jeremiah 32

3. Why was Jeremiah in prison? (Jer 32:3-5)
4. What was about to happen to Jerusalem?
5. In what way was it a dumb idea for Jeremiah to buy property at that time? As we ask the questions: Where was God in all this? And What was God calling him to do? What good reasons did Jeremiah have for buying the field?
6. What were some of the things the people of Israel were doing in rebellion from God’s ways? (Jer 32: 33-35)
7. What were God’s longer term promises to the people of Israel? (Jer 32: 37-41)

There is much good in our culture today that we can celebrate. But other things need to be challenged. Martin looked at the way Jeremiah discerned and challenged the culture of his day by: knowing the Bible and applying God’s word to his day; trusting in God’s long term promises; and discerning the truth. (Choose some of the following questions)

8. Who helps you think about these things and grow in cultural discernment? Is there anyone you talk with about what you are reading in the Bible? What are your Bible reading habits? Is there anything new you would like to try?
9. Is there a new door opening for you that you think God might be calling you to step through? How does it feel? Is it risky? Who helps you discern where God is leading you?
10. Are there any “practices of slowing” that you would like to try to help you think and pray longer term and get past our culture’s “tyranny of the now”?
11. How do you discern if something is true or fake news? Martin gave two things that can help: Go to the source, and check the facts. What else is helpful? Consider what Jeremiah does in 32:16-25.

Close in prayer remembering that the topic from week 1 “Intimacy with Jesus” is the most important way we can grow in cultural discernment.

Lord Jesus Christ, Thank you that you entered our world to save us from the world, and send us to the world with your good news.

Draw us ever closer to you by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Shape our thinking and our living. Bring others alongside us so we can learn from each other and from you. Show us what we can celebrate in our culture, and what we need to challenge.

Give us courage and companions so we can stand strong in our faith for today.

In your name we pray, Amen.