

Entering a new land #2

How did you come to faith?

- If you consider yourself a Christian, how did you come to that faith?
 - what key steps did you go through...?
- Similarly, what has been your experience of growing in faith:
 - what kinds of contexts did it happen in?
 - what have you done that fostered or facilitated that growth?
- Anticipating things like events and books and Bible Study...
- **And suggest that those are some of our landmarks**
 - if someone is wanting to find out about faith, we will suggest a particular route
 - or if someone is grappling with an issue, and seeking to grow in faith, we'll think in terms of the route or the landmarks that helped us or those around us...
- But for instance baptism woman: **am I allowed to come to church?**
 - **the landscape has changed!**
- Its as if, culturally, a whole slew of things we assume are true have gone
 - and because they are **assumptions** on our part, we've never made them **explicit...** we often don't even know what they are!
- Let me go so far as to suggest that we are **LOST**
 - our aim is to bring the Lordship of Christ to people who have never known him... to take new territory...
 - but we are operating without maps, in a landscape that is unfamiliar to even our immediate forebears - who wrote most of the leadership and evangelism books that we will have read as younger Christians
- We've grown used to maps, even sat navs, for navigating
 - **perhaps we've become uncomfortable with the thought we don't really know where we are going?**
 - **(analagous to our discomfort at not being able to keep in touch - mobiles - yet we quite happily managed without them for years!!)**

What did they find out?

- **spyglass image**
- Significance of spying:
 - spies in Norway during WW2, reported during week, who leaked British General Auchinleck's plans and probably majorly contributed to German forces controlling Norway for rest of war
- **What did these spies find out?**
 - what military information did the spies discover? **nothing of note**
 - what geographical information did they come across? **nothing of note**
- **What they actually found out about was what was in people's hearts**
 - they spent time listening to a particular person who gave them insight into what was happening in the community of those whose ruler was not the Lord

How did they find it out?

- They **left** their own camp
- They **spent time** with people whose lord was not the Lord
- They **listened** to what was being said to them
- They found help in unexpected places!
 - prostitutes don't get the best of reputations!

What did they do with the information?

- First, **they demonstrated grace:**
 - they listened to, not judged, Rahab...
 - and they promised that she would be spared - they offered her salvation from the coming judgement
- Second, **they shared with Joshua (leader) and reflected on its significance**
 - and the result was encouragement, not despair
 - "there is room for Christ's Lordship here," if you like

Example

- I came across an example:
 - someone seeking to engage with their local community had been asking questions, and reflecting on the answers came up with this summary of what people in their area thought about church specifically
 - it resonated with my experience, so want to finish with this:
 - *church is where you go to be told what to think and told what to do*
- *Start reflection on that, but invite people to chat about it over coffee!*
- And suggest we need to become better spies:
 - willing to leave the safety of our own camp
 - willing to listen
 - willing to find help in unexpected places
 - willing to demonstrate grace
 - willing to reflect on what we hear, putting it into the context of God's plan to bring his Lordship to this new territory...