

# MORAVIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Devotional Notes

April 2013

## Theme: Following in Christ's Footprints

After two days of continuous snowfall with a foot-depth of snow at the back and front of my house, and seeing all the disruption to transport on the television news, it's difficult to think of travelling anywhere far at the moment. This morning as I went to church down my back path, round the back of the terrace and through the tunnel into Westgate, I could place my feet into the footprints I made yesterday going to and from the shops, and so it was not quite as difficult as it was yesterday when I had to plod through the virgin snow. However, as our journey with Jesus continues down the eastern side of the Jordan river, I'm not so sure that Jesus' disciples felt that following in his footprints was getting any easier. In addition to their worries of what might happen when they reached Jerusalem, there was an incident which made them feel the task was impossible. Certainly the rich young man thought the demands which Jesus made were too great. **Please read Matthew 19:16-30.**

This young man who came to Jesus was well aware that things in his life were not quite right, yet he was obviously a very good person. He had always kept the ten commandments, and was quite probably also very religious, maybe even pious. What was it then that made him feel uneasy enough to approach Jesus? The question with which he initially comes to Jesus is, 'What good deed must I do to have eternal life?' He realised that keeping the rules and regulations was not enough, he also recognised that even regularly attending worship and special festivals was insufficient, so he felt there must be something a little extra that he had to do for God in order to attain eternal life.

Two thousand years after the resurrection, we are well aware that we can't gain eternal life through doing one good deed, however good the deed might be. The good deed has been done for us on the cross by Jesus. We for our part have not just to express our faith in words, but live it out in our lives in a relationship with God through his son, Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus makes it plain in what he says to his followers afterwards, that it is in following him that we will inherit eternal life. That is not simply following his teaching, but following his example and his way of life in sacrificial service to God.

This is such a tall order that I'm sure we all echo with the disciples, almost in desperation, 'Then who can be saved?' And Jesus gives that wonderful response 'For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.' Anyone who has made a real effort to follow in Christ's footprints will inherit eternal life. The problem with the young man across the Jordan was that he made no effort at all. He heard Jesus' answer, and simply went away grieving - he didn't even try to do even the one good deed he had initially enquired about.

Hilary Smith

For discussion:

1. At this season of Passion Week and Easter with our daily readings, we are again strongly reminded of the sacrifice which Jesus has made for us. How have these readings impacted on you again this Eastertime? How do you feel you can respond to all that Jesus has done for you?
2. Some of Jesus' teaching is very hard and seems impossible to achieve. Do you ever feel sorrowful as the rich young man did that you can't achieve anything, or in desperate like the disciples who had done so much and yet it all seemed impossible? How encouraging do you find Jesus' words that 'for God all things are possible'?