

Class 29 - Charity & Oneness



Goals

In class 29 you will

- Understand the relationship between charity and oneness.

The Lost City.

Roger walked into what was sometimes known as 'The Lost City' and was immediately struck by the level of suffering. This was not one or two homeless and hungry, this was tens of thousands of lost, lonely and painful souls. There were those bankrupt, those ostracised for their colour, religion, their weight or lack of weight, their ugly faces or scars or criminal record, their sexuality, their violence, their mental illness, their lack of education. There were people everywhere, in everyone's faces, most were barely conscious from a cocktail of alcohol and drugs and petrol and paint cans. Everyone was on top of everyone and all they seemed to want was distance.

A mess of urine and faeces littered the landscape but mostly it choked Rogers breath. He could barely breathe without feeling he was going to vomit. Involuntarily already he had dry wretched but had been able to hide it feebly behind a movement of his hand.

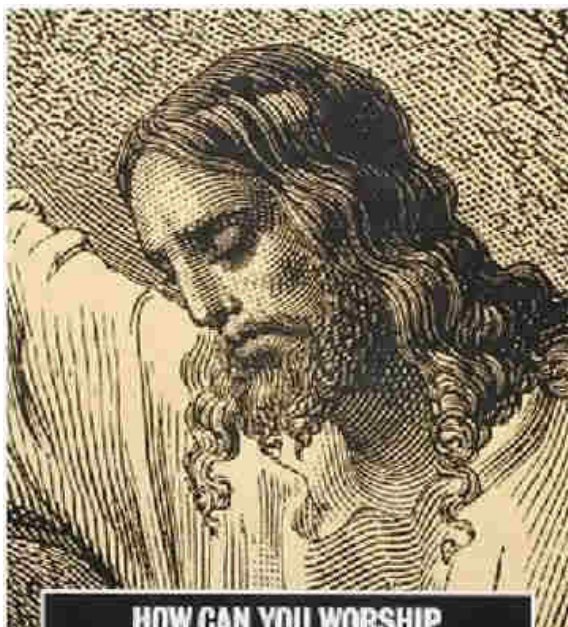
He stared away not because he meant to, but because he physically could not get his eyes to look. He had never seen anything like it. This lack of human dignity, lack of human self-worth.



Then he recognised a face, a shining light, a nerdy, gawky looking girl he recognised from high school. She caught his eyes immediately and smiled. There was nothing at all attractive about her physically but in this place she exuded warmth and presence. All the suffering people around her seemed to gather another breath as she walked past.

'hi Roger' she called, 'what are you doing here?'

'hi' said Roger, not remembering her name, 'I came to see Sister Veronica, I have some money for the ...' his voice trailed as he suddenly remembered that this girls name was Veronica.



'O you are an angel' she squealed, 'thank you so much, you have no idea how much this helps'

'And you are Sister Veronica?'

'Yes, of course, do you not recognise me?' she laughed.

'Yes, yes! But I did not know,' he stammered. He was so shocked his words were coming out in short bursts as if incapable of all lining up in any sort of order. 'I did not know!'

'did not know what?'

'I did not know that you are the famous Sister Veronica, winner of the Nobel Prize, leader of the wonderful 'Sisters of the Lost''

She smiled, but lowered her gaze and whispered solemnly. 'It is not me that is special, it is every one of these people. It is they that deserve the love. Look at the adversity they face, the loneliness. I am so lucky to be amongst them.'

Roger tried to look around but his eyes could not look, let alone see. They physically would not fix themselves on the amount of pain and suffering that surrounded him. All he could feel was he needed to get out of here. He wanted to give the cheque to Veronica and run and run and run. He smiled.

'Roger, I know it is hard, but there is nothing these people really need but us.'



Sister Veronica was suddenly serious and whispering as if telling a great secret. 'They need us to be present, so that they can see how we have removed their dignity, taken their hope and then kicked them into this. Their fault was to believe in us. To trust us.'

Roger looked at Sister Veronica incredulously. He was one of the people at the local church that went out of his way to give to the poor. Each week 10% of what he earned was given to charity. He gave his old clothes and many times furniture and other things to the Salvation Army. The reason he was here now, was because he had recently organised a big dance party that raised over \$100,000 for Sister Veronica and her wonderful 'Sisters of the Lost'.

'Every day we push them down, so we might feel a little higher ourselves,' Sister Veronica continued, 'are you here to really help them or help your self?'

'I want to help them,' he said defensively. 'How can we be blamed when they will not work or are not willing to get an education, or are simply too drunk or high to do anything for themselves. I want to help but they must be willing to help themselves.'

Sister Veronica smiled and looked down. 'it is not them, it is us that first has to change.' She paused and gathered her thoughts. She was obviously exasperated. Exasperated after many years of this.

'if you really want to help, try looking at one of them. Just one.' There was a long pause as Roger took in her words. It was true all he had been able to do was scan the scenes before him, he had not been able to look, to really see. He was scared. And he really didn't know why. Perhaps it was the feeling that if he got involved he would be compelled by his conscience to stay here, to be in this squalor, this painful hell of a place, for ever.

'I don't need to look I can see what is going on,' Roger defended, 'I can see that no matter how much money we give they will keep taking, and keep taking. It is like a bottomless pit. These people do not care how much we try to help, they will just take more and what they cant take, they will steal.'

Suddenly Sister Veronica looked at Roger with such love and understanding, such compassion, he felt his heart would melt. She reached out with her hand and touching him gently on the arm, she whispered again, 'Just look.'

Roger looked up and immediately saw a little girl who could be no more than 7 years old. She was obviously hungry and wore rags for clothes. Her face was dirty and hair dishevelled. He looked at her and found his gaze could now not be averted. And as he looked he could see her story. He could see that she was the child of addicts that had sold her for drugs. She had then been taken to the U.S. as a child sex slave. After 1 year friends of Sister Veronica had found her and managed to free her or at least had brought to this city of lost souls. Roger could clearly see that this little girl's tortured upbringing had left her not trusting anyone, unloved but fiercely strong. He could see that she could easily become a violent criminal, the sort that would have little remorse about killing people, or destroying others' lives. But he could also see that if she was loved she might have a chance.



'All suffering has only one cause Roger,' she paused this time interminably and then finally continued, 'lack of love. And all happiness has only one cause, the fullness of love. It is really that simple.'

Roger couldn't help it but he was still staring at the little girl and the more he looked the more he could see. He could see her entire past, more than that he could feel it as though he was walking in her shoes. And as Sister Veronica continued he could see a flow of golden light from Sister Veronica to the little girl.

'I agree with you about the money. It does not matter how many hundreds of thousands, or hundreds of millions of dollars we throw into the lost city it will all disappear if we do not change first. It is our responsibility to stop ostracising minorities because they are slightly different to us. Every single soul here has a story of not being loved enough. And now we put them further from us. We give charity but what we are really saying is 'I am up here' and 'you are down there' and I am paying so I don't have to look. I am paying so I can put distance from me and your pain. People commit crimes so that they can be noticed, so that they can be loved. There is not a crime in the world that does not hide a cry for love. And what we do? We lock them up in a place that they will be certain to not be loved. Where people will never look at them. Or see them. Let alone love them.'



Roger felt himself welling up almost uncontrollably as he listened to Sister Veronica but was watching the little girls life play before him. He, for a moment, thought he was her. There she was 3 years old being dragged from one hellhole to another, while her parents were drunk and bordering on unconscious. Both parents had been victimised as children, both inextricably drawn to each other. Tears flowed freely down his face as he saw the patterns unfolding generation after generation.

'And the biggest problem is that they have so much distrust and so much self-loathing that they feel they are unlovable. So then they physically stop themselves from receiving love if it is ever offered. So we have a terrible loop. Where we remove the love, they react by blocking themselves off and it is very difficult to open them to love again or to receive love when it is offered.'

'So we just have to love and accept them over and over again,' Roger offered.

'Yes that is it, Roger! It is the only way. To love without condition or expectation and to begin with total acceptance. Education, self-worth and the rest will follow, but in the first place we have to be the perfect example'

'just as God does.'

'What did you say Roger?'

'I said, just as God does.'

'yes that is exactly the point. We are loved infinitely every moment, but we have closed ourselves off. We do not believe we deserve it, just as the souls here do not believe they deserve it. But in reality, we are all supposed to be having a great time, to be in heaven and we would be if we could open ourselves to the love that floods us at every moment.'

Roger couldn't believe it but suddenly he could smell flowers. He found himself looking around the lost city and staring at every face and seeing the stories, the painful stories, but in this moment all he could feel was love. As though everyone was loving him and he was loving them, as though, it struck him suddenly, he was in heaven. 'What a perfect place' he thought to himself. 'What a perfect place.'

And as he looked back to Sister Veronica he realised how she was able to be smiling, to be happy in this city of lost souls. This was her heaven. A place of repair, surely, but she was so perfectly suited. He saw her radiant smile and love flowing from her to every person in this place. With her they had found a measure of acceptance, a measure of love, that they could open to. They trusted her and she gave them dignity and respect. And he realised that for every one person here there was at least ten others that had been freed by Sister Veronica's love and had now begun to help in their own ways. Some directly with her, but many more in their own families and communities offering and receiving love with abandon. Roger could see a tidal wave following this beautiful soul and he marvelled at the effect one Sister Veronica, just one soul, could have by engaging in the flow of love with so many others.

"Thanks so much for everything. I will be back," he said.

"No thank you," Sister Veronica smiled, "you probably don't realise it but that was much more powerful than all the money, all the charity that you and your friends have given in the past."

Roger gasped. She was right. He knew it. Now it was for him to change. Just as it is for each of us. We each must see, must each walk in anothers' shoes, must each engage in the flow of love with no conditions and expectations. We will not hide ourselves from each other, but we will all be found inside the hearts of us all.

Exercise 29 - Oneness

Please sit and concentrate for a moment on your loved ones. Bring an image of them to your heart and offer them the purest and sweetest love you can imagine, without expectations or conditions, just your heart full of love. They might be your family or simply your friends, but in this moment, offer love and love and love.

Feel them deep inside your own heart as though they have an existence within you. And realise that they do. And you have an existence in them.

Feel their existence within you, broadening your experience, deepening your intuition, inspiring a wider and deeper vision.

Offer them love and feel their love flowing back to you. In this flow of love we are all family, we are all one.

Feel how you are expanded by your oneness. Feel the peace and lack of fear.

Then spend some time expanding this sense of oneness.

Expand your heart to encompass friends and acquaintances. Here there is no judgement, no labels, no analysis of perceived failings, here we are all family or deeper still, we are all one.

Then continue the process to strangers. Deeper still to enemies or those that perhaps you hide from or scorn. Feel how each of these people expand you and realise that you will not be complete, not be perfect until there is room in your heart to be one with every one and every thing, even those that you presently judge to be repulsive.

Our journey is inevitably to oneness. We are all family. It is not a journey to exclude some and include others, we are all connected. If even one of us is not perfect, then inevitably each one of us can not be.

Spend time here in this oneness and be the inspirational catalyst to all of your brothers and sisters in the universe.

