

Dear Friends,

Spoiler Alert: This letter makes references to an episode of 'All Creatures Great and Small' first shown on 17th October 2024

There's nothing better than watching a gentle TV drama set in a beautiful part of the world where a variety of reflections can be drawn based on the life of the characters contained within it. When I watched this episode of 'All Creatures Great and Small' there were several aspects I could have chosen to write about, but I have chosen just one.

Richard Carmody is living at Skeldale House, the veterinary practice's home and receives his exam results letting him know that he is now a qualified vet. More than this, he has received an 'outstanding distinction' and has been offered a research post in London which was entirely suited to his skills and outlook. His initial reaction is to turn this down to stay in Yorkshire. By the end of the programme, he has changed his mind. So, what happened?

Carmody hadn't experienced a sense of belonging in his early life and had found this at Skeldale House. He'd found a place where he could be himself. Once he was assured that he would always have a place to come back to in Yorkshire it gave him the confidence to step out and go to London where his skills would have been used to great effect through the opportunity offered to him.

As disciples of Christ, we are invited to follow the ways of Jesus, to let God come alongside us and to know that we belong with him. This sense of belonging enables us to feel secure, and then to step out in new ways. We have in Jesus someone in whom we can always turn and who guides us through the Holy Spirit. Belonging to Christ means we are assured of eternal life both for now and always. This invitation should fill us with a deep sense of peace, comfort and belonging.

We respond to this invitation through the way we live and the actions we take. This is to serve God where we are and for others to see the way God is working in and through our lives, as individuals and as a church community. It is where we have the confidence to take new steps in the ways in which we serve Christ knowing that it's not about success but about being faithful to who God made us to be. We may be being prompted in a new way to serve God and we should explore this knowing that first and foremost, we belong to Christ and therefore we will always have the security of that relationship. God will work through others to provide the resources that are needed, and we can be reassured of that through the Holy Spirit.

'All Creatures Great and Small' is, on the surface, a gentle weeknight drama. However, there is much we can learn about life from it and about God through it. As we work together, let's seek the ways God may be leading us and respond with confidence, knowing this comes from a deep sense of our identity in Christ.

God bless,
Chris