

maybe

a community
following in the way of Jesus
by prayer and action
for a better world now

THE TILlich 'COURAGE-TO-BE' SERIES [1] COURAGE AMIDST DOUBT

What's living but courage?
R S Thomas 'lore'

• PAUL TILlich

Paul Tillich (1886-1965) was a pastor, philosopher, political rebel and theological radical. As a young theology lecturer in Germany prior to the 2nd World War he courageously and dangerously propagated anti-Nazi writings. This formative experience can be traced throughout his life's work, particularly in his determined focus upon the theme of courage.

Tillich claims that any vital, meaningful life is one lived with passionate and committed courage. What he means by this is to be life-affirming and righteous in the face of difficulties, tragedies and great evil. To be real and honest about ourselves and the world, but - instead of letting ourselves slip into cynicism and inaction as a result - to be courageous. To say a resounding 'yes' to life and God. Courage is for Tillich the power of life to affirm itself in spite of the ambiguity. Tillich famously claimed that we don't look to God to make us secure, we look to God to give us the courage to face our own insecurities.

In this series we will be exploring what different and often surprising shapes a courageous life can take...

• RESOURCES

Be strong and **courageous**. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Deuteronomy 31:6 [check out the context of this]

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

John 20

Doubt is not the opposite of faith, it is an element of faith.

Paul Tillich



Angel of the North, Anthony Gormley

Security is so seductive, and insecurity is so frightening. But security is always false, and insecurity is always real. No religion can make anyone secure, though it, like the drugs on which our society is so dependent, can give the illusion of security. True religion enables one to grasp life with radical insecurity and to live it with courage. It does not aid us in the pretense that our insecurities have been taken away.

John Shelby Spong [inspired by Tillich]

• DISCUSSION RESOURCE

+ Is there a particular character on screen, in literature or in 'real life' whose courage you admire?

+ Tillich's depiction of courageous living revolves around facing up to those things which would cause us to be *uncourageous* – the doubts, our own insecurities, our lack of faith in God and/or in humanity. Which aspects of our lives or of the world cause us to feel *uncourageous*?

+ John Shelby Spong – commenting on Tillich – claims that insecurity is integral to faith. When many religious ideas revel in the idea of God as a provider of great security, hope and safety, can we really agree with Shelby's point? Can doubts enrich and strengthen our faith? If so can we think of any specific examples in our own experience?

+ The risen Jesus comes to fearful disciples with words of peace. Is he bringing security? Or is it a call to be courageous? Or perhaps both?

+ If maybe is to be a courageous community how might that change us? How might it affect, for example, the way that we approach any big 'next steps' or demanding challenges for the community?

+ Coming out of this conversation any ideas for a ritual/improvisation might we do at our Eucharist this weekend?