5. Jez the guidepost

Jez and his Dad stories were first written as 1-minute Monday-Friday thoughts for Pennine Radio

Jez looked up and scratched his head. “That’s a bit of a tall order, isn’t it?” he said, “a signpost that can’t be misunderstood…by *anyone*?”

His Dad smiled but said firmly, “If we want people to find the way to heaven, then we’ve got have some way of showing them that they will all understand.”

Jez put down the tools he was using, and took a stub of pencil from behind one ear. “Well,” he said, “I suppose one of the most basic problems is that people are so self-willed. It’s no good handing out just a set of instructions – they don’t like being told what to do. It tends to put them right off.”

“It does,” said his Dad. “It’s been like that from the very beginning.”

“What I reckon we need,” said Jez, “is not a signpost that points, but one that beckons. That way people can be invited, but not feel they’re being pushed. How does that sound?”

“Sound good,” said his Dad. “We are inviting them, after all.”

The next day, Jez's Dad dropped in to see how things were shaping up.

"Well," said Jez, taking the pencil stub out of his mouth, "the idea of a sign that beckons rather than one that points people to heaven seems just fine. But I'm still stuck on the problem of space."

"Space?" said his Dad, "You're worried about travel?"

"No!" said Jez, "I mean how can we get all we want to say on one beckoning post? People would get fed up standing reading too big a board."

"Listening!" said his Dad. "How about that for an idea?"

"Go on," said Jez.

"Well, *usually* a signposts something you look at and read," said his Dad, "but a beckoning post could be something you listen to."

"You mean…" said jez.

"That's it," said his Dad, "and what's more, you could make it the kind of message people hear not just with their ears, but with their conscience."

"Yes," said Jez, "it's harder to mistake what your conscience hears. And *that* wouldn't need a load of instructions – it just needs activating."

Jez worked on his drawing board for some time and then stopped. “I’ve hit a snag,” he announced.

“ A snag?” said his Dad, “What’s the trouble?”

“Even if we make this beckoning post that activates people’s consciences, and draws them to heaven,” said Jez, “not everyone going to be able to see it.”

“Ah!” said his Dad, “I’ve thought of that.”

“You have?” said Jez.

“Yes,” said his Dad. “A signpost you put by the track, right?”

“Yes,” said Jez.

“And a landmark you put by a high place on the track so it stands out.”

“Yes?” said Jez.

“So you put this beckoning post on a high scale of values.”

“You what?” said Jez.

“Well, if it’s to speak to people’s consciences,” said his Dad, “you’ve got to make it so everyone can see it’s important.”

“Oh, I’ve got you!” said Jez. “They’ll be able to perceive – sort of inwardly – how important it is. Yes! That way there’s much less room for error. I like it!”

Jez looked up as his Dad appeared later in the doorway. “I’ve been thinking,” he said. “We’ve got it worked out about this guidepost to help people get to heaven – and we’ve tried to make it so that no one can miss it, or misunderstand it, or get put off by it.”

“Yes,” said his Dad, “that’s what I wanted.”

“Well, I’ve been thinking,” said Jez, “It’s going to be a long journey for some.”

“Aha!” said his Dad, “Great minds think alike. I’d already decided to provide a courier for anybody who feels drawn to heaven and starts to make the journey.”

“That’s good,” said Jez.

His Dad went on, “Yes, he can advise people about local problems and guide them over difficulties on the way. He can act as interpreter if there are any language barriers.”

“Not only that,” broke in Jez, “ he can encourage the faint-hearted – and get people to tell each other about their experiences and help each other that way. That’s great, Dad. That really is caring for the needy.”

"I reckon that's about it," said Jez. "I don't see that anyone who's really interested in getting to heaven could possibly go astray. The only thing is, what are we going to make this guidepost out of?"

"You are it," said his Dad. "*You* are going to be this beckoning post."

"Me?" said Jez.

"You go to them," said his Dad. "Your life will beckon them – the way you live in contact with me."

"I see," said Jez.

"And what you *say*," said his Dad, "what you say will speak to their conscience like nothing else could."

"Oh yes, listening to my words," said Jez.

"And when you rise from the dead, well, no one can fail to see the importance of *that*," said his Dad. "At least, no one who's seriously interested. And they'll come and listen."

"And the courier?" asked Jez.

"I have him ready," said his Dad. "The moment you come back, I'll send him to anyone who wants to start the journey."