

# Thought for the day: 19-25 April 2021

by Katie Seaton

So much thought and human contact has been online in the past year that I thought it might be interesting to use tweets as prompts for this week's thoughts. I went through my Twitter feed at 8pm-ish one evening and took the first seven suitable tweets. I curated them as little as possible, to get a snapshot of who I've connected to and what they are interested in. To what extent can I say our concerns of this particular Tuesday are more universal human concerns? Can I find people recorded in the Bible thinking similar thoughts?

## Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #1 Monday 19 April

**'Nobody wanted to go swimming in the ocean when this was released. Jaws (1975) directed by Steven Spielberg.'** [Tweeted with an image from the film]

The human mind is so susceptible to the power of mass suggestion! People felt safe bathing in the sea until a film showed them vividly what might be lurking beyond sight. Of course, we were never *totally* safe bathing... but the fact that 'everyone else' is doing it makes us suspend that knowledge on an emotional level. The groupthink is one of the hardest forces in the human psyche to repel, isn't it?

The character of the mayor in *Jaws* has recently been compared regularly to the pandemic decisions of authorities who chose to downplay a danger they couldn't yet see. They were attempting to preserve important things that would be damaged by emergency action: the economy; our ways of life; popularity, perhaps.

The sea is a consistent, powerful, character in the Bible from beginning to end, cropping up in some of its most memorable stories. It is evidence (if it were needed) of our profound, respectful, dependent relationship with it since we emerged from it. How many people, in the course of human history, I wonder, have set sail on dangerous waters, rather than lose

their immediate livelihood, and died? The sea is a constant reminder that we can never dominate natural forces.



*'God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called*

*"seas.'" (Genesis 1: 10)*

*'Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.'* (Revelation 21: 1)

## **Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #2**

### **Tuesday 20 April**

**'My daughter got the first ever signed copy of Yasmin Khan's gloriously unique and wonderful book #ripefigs. It's chockfull of human stories and lush recipes from the eastern Mediterranean.'**

What luck to get two human constants in my first two tweet-thoughts! Like the sea, humans have always worked together to produce, and gathered together around, food. There was actually another tweet that went viral, around this time last year: "At this point, I realise that perhaps I should have cultivated some hobbies other than eating lunch with my friends."

But this particular tweet was by British-Iranian comedian Shappi Khorsandi. She references the human stories behind food. These kinds of stories are things like: "My grandmother cultivated this recipe to use up her mother's abundant supply of green beans..." or "The person who taught me to knead this way also had a profound wider influence on my life...".

OK, these examples are actually both my stories! What are yours?

Passing traditions of food sourcing, preparation and rituals from person to person, parent to child - in particular, mother to daughter - connects all of us in some way to forebears recent and distant.



Why are the details of these domestic experiences and legacies not recorded more fully in the Bible, I wonder? They are mentioned in passing, but I didn't find much that dwelled on the detail. If you know of some mentions, please tell me! I think they are among the most important and ubiquitous parts of human experience, so God has surely been present and influential there?

### **Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #3 Wednesday 21 April**

**'I'm officially at the age where if something is too loud I'm irritated lol.'**

Right. Look. I have to say it. The syntax of this tweet *strongly* suggests that the author is not at an age where aging ought to be their primary concern. Agreed?

Or... perhaps, maybe we're all concerned with aging, really, from that moment of childhood when we understand we are mortal. I greedily savour my awareness of life because of it.

Anyway, I'm not sure how helpful it is to dwell on what typically characterises older and younger people. There already seems to be rather a lot of animosity between generations as it is. The reasons for this need to be taken seriously, I think.

I've found that lots of this week's thoughts turned to the early church - perhaps it is some kind of comparison to the huge global villages to be found on social media.



I have a hunch that, before too long, humanity in general will need to rely far more on community - the truly inclusive community where the only condition to entry is being a person who wants to be there; old, young, and everything in between, interdependent. Faith communities have knowledge of some forms of

this; let's be sure to keep that safe.

*'The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"' (1 Corinthians: 21)*

## **Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #4 Thursday 22 April**

**'In light of the reporting on Scott Rudin, I am thinking a lot about this interview I did in 2017 with Steven Soderbergh. In it, he said that when he talks to students, part of the discussion is about running a humane set.'**



For context, this is about film directors who bully, and abuse their power, a lot of which has been coming to light lately.

It actually rather surprised to me to discover for myself how much emphasis is placed on hierarchy in the arts/entertainment production world.

After nearly a decade of being a mother and very part-time music teacher, I had to rapidly re-learn how to be not-in-charge (graciously)! I've not encountered a malicious superior yet, though - but I've heard some stories...

In these early days following Easter, my mind often dwells on the "What next?" times. What I find remarkable is how relatively egalitarian that new church seemed to be. Some of the people that joined – Paul is the most obvious, but presumably there were many others - had formerly been Important People in society; I wonder what kind of attitude adjustments they had to make?

I also wonder how it was for previously 'unimportant' people of the early church to find themselves with a different relationship to some of their social 'superiors'? Truly meeting them... discovering their insecurities, their prejudices... discovering their friendship.

Back to the creative arts, and the reason why there is so much bullying in production crew hierarchies is pretty obvious. People are desperate to be there. They can't kick back against powerful people without losing their 'shot' at working in that field. But I think we can do better than that, don't you?

*'Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever - no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.'* (Philemon 1: 5-6)

## **Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #5 Friday 23 April**

**'Osime Brown is an innocent young autistic man who has suffered enough injustice because of the lack of acceptance and awareness of autism. Join us in asking home office to stop the deportation order. April 16, 1-4pm, Home Office London.'**

I've only recently become aware of this case, through the autism awareness campaigners I follow on Twitter.

A little about Osime Brown from the campaigners:

He is 22 years old. He is profoundly autistic and developmentally younger than his peers.

- Osime was jailed in 2018 over the theft of a phone in a street robbery.
- However, a witness for the defence said that Osime had not taken the phone and had in fact asked the other teens carrying out the robbery to stop.
- As well as a 5-year prison sentence, it was ordered that upon his release he be taken to a detention centre and deported to Jamaica.
- He left Jamaica at the age of 4. He has no family network there. He is a vulnerable adult.
- Osime is extremely stressed, suffering meltdowns, self-injuring, and has developed a heart condition.
- Distressingly, one example given that Osime could not look after himself in Jamaica was that he asked his mother which bus he would take to see her if he is deported. She lives in Birmingham.



We read in the book of Acts how language barriers were temporarily melted so that all could notice God. This was the very beginning of the 'church'. It makes me think about how society as a whole generally fails to hear properly what many neurodivergent people communicate to

us. What of God do we miss in doing so?

And, although this isn't the focus of the campaign, I would berate myself if I didn't also state this: it seems pretty likely that racial discrimination and a broader climate of xenophobia are both on display here. Back to Pentecost: the Holy Spirit used people of different *nationalities* to show each other something important.

If you feel that the deportation decision is wrong, you can find more information, and the resources for the campaign to prevent it (which includes a petition), here: <https://linktr.ee/Justiceforosimebrown>

*"Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them ... declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them...' (Acts 2: 7-8, 11-13)*

## **Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #6 Saturday 24 April**

**'bruh how u gonna just kidnap a bear and make it go gym?'**



The context for this tweet was a New York Times Headline that read: *Scientists found that wild grizzlies, like humans, seem born to laze. The findings suggest that the innate urge to avoid exertion plays a greater role in how all creatures, great and small, typically behave.*

I'm going to have to agree with the tweeter here. I want to see the method of this study! How did they make absolutely sure that the grizzlies didn't just think the scientists' drills were stupid?!

The thing about exertion: it's meant to be coupled with purpose - right? We've all found it hard to get our bodies moving when we need to clean, or build, or garden, but then noticed, once we got moving and saw the results, that it was satisfying.

Moving beyond just physical exertion to a more general definition...

...sometimes the purpose of work is far from our present reality. Sometimes we never personally see the benefits of it. In these cases, depending on the circumstance, accountability to the 'tribe' *can* be a powerful motivating force that compensates. In the snippet from Thessalonians below, Christians were encouraged to reject those who didn't pull their weight.

Some of you may watch the Covid updates on YouTube from Dr John Campbell. Recently, he went over an American study that remarked on the 'present-centredness' of governments, and how that mindset can become reflected in populations. What is meant by this is that some authorities had put off investing in pandemic preparedness because it wasn't an immediate problem at that time. Even though they knew that we were overdue a pandemic.

I am certainly guilty of 'present-centeredness'. I'm sure I'm not alone. What other threats will we not act upon with enough seriousness to mitigate them until disaster is already upon us? Climate change springs to mind, naturally...

*'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you...'* (2 Thessalonians 3: 6-7)

## **Seven tweets at 8pm on a Tuesday #7 Sunday 25 April**

**'Guess who just went from being made fun of for his voice to signing with the agency of his favorite voice actors. Happy to join the family!'**

I don't know this person. I am not an actor, but there's a lot of them out there, so I see many actors' highs and lows. And I'm delighted for this person, whoever they are!



Someone's voice is, to me, the sound of their eyes. You can take a picture of someone, cover up all of their face but their eyes, and get a far better insight into how they are feeling.

In the same way, try (in some situation when it's not rude to do this, obviously!)

looking away from a person who is talking, and listen not to the words they are saying but what their voice itself is telling you.

I have heard tension in people's throats when even they themselves don't know they are stressed.

I have heard pride in achievements, desperate to be allowed out, when the words are modest and deflecting.

To celebrate the sonic character of a voice that had once been ridiculed is a profoundly affirming thing for that person, I believe.

*'Lord, hear my voice.'* (Psalm 130: 2)