

## Painting's Picture



### What's in it for me?

I've been thinking a bit more about my last article on how God often seems to ask us to give things up. The book of Job has also been with me over the last few weeks.

Job and his friends are grappling with the problem of Job's misfortune and suffering. His friends insist that it is God's punishment for Job's wrongdoing. Job though points out that the people who are really bad often seem to get away with it whilst he who has worked hard to live a more righteous life is suffering from one disaster after the other.

The end of Job's story makes it clear that his friend's simple cause and effect philosophy behind the problem of suffering is greatly flawed. Suffering is a normal feature of human existence for both those who follow God and those who don't. I thought though a little more about Job. He was angry that God didn't seem to handle his situation fairly. He felt that his actions deserved more than the series of disasters that came upon him and his family. Is God unjust and what was Job's motivation for living a righteous life in the first place? Did he simply live righteously in order to be blessed in material and spiritual ways?

Our present day consumer culture is perhaps of that mind even if Job wasn't. Consumerism at its height is completely self-centred. I will invest time, energy and money if what I get back is worth more to me than the investment. From the other side, selling is about convincing people that what they receive is worth more to them than what they put in.

There is a danger that we're selling Church in these ways. If you join our church this is what you get. But if people don't get what they've been promised or if something changes along the way their allegiance to the Church could rapidly slip away.

I'm not sure that we can ever get what we want from Church. The way of Jesus is about what's best for others and the hardest part about that is forgoing what I want in preference of the common good.

*Steve*