

['Doctor Who' clip from 'Midnight', Chap 8 'Think About It!']

In my home country, the USA, we would say that the Doctor is a bit of a 'smart alec.' I think you might use a ruder work than 'alec,' but I'll stick with mine.

The Doctor, and particularly David Tennant's Doctor, liked to be the smart alec. He enjoyed making the witty, insulting quips to both humans and aliens alike, and never seem to worry about the reaction. This Doctor knew that he was more intelligent and capable than anyone else around him, and as a result he thought he was superior. But what happens next to him in this episode? The frightened humans turn against him. They blame him for the terror in the ship, and they try to throw him out of the airlock. His 'because I'm clever' wasn't, in fact, the most clever thing to say at that point.

In other words, the Doctor is showing us an example of how NOT to behave. But can't it be so tempting? Can't it be such fun to make that cutting remark, that clever response. When we do know better than other people, it can so tempting to show off, to show how much stronger, cleverer, better we think we are. We like to strut our stuff.

However, the greatest, lasting changes in our world have been made by people who were willing to show the opposite of that arrogance. Real, lasting change has been made by people who are willing to show humility. Like the Bible tells us, 'A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.'

One man who used humility to achieve his goal was the Prophet Mohammed, PBUH. During his lifetime, as Mohammed gained converts to Islam, he built up a large and successful army. When he finally returned to the city of his birth, Mecca, he decided

to leave the army behind. He and 1400 of his people went instead as pilgrims to the city. If Mohammed had strutted his stuff and brought his army then the people of Mecca would have gone out to fight against him. But because Mohammed came as a humble pilgrim the Meccans met with him, and a treaty was drawn up. Peace was maintained because Mohammed was willing to be humble.

Another man who knew the strength of humility was Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi captured the support of many in India during their struggle for independence, but he didn't use physical violence. Instead, Gandhi and his followers used non-violent mass civil disobedience to finally gain India's independence from Britain. Gandhi himself lived a humble life, living in a small house, wearing clothes he had woven himself, and eating a simple, vegetarian diet.

The humble way, the path of non-violent resistance, was also followed by Martin Luther King, Jr, the leader of the Civil Rights movement in America. He too used civil disobedience to promote equal rights for African Americans.

Martin Luther King, Jr was a Christian. Mohandas Gandhi was not. But both of them were inspired by Jesus of Nazareth. During the run up to Easter many Christians will be remembering the story of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

The Bible tells us that soldiers came to arrest Jesus in a garden outside Jerusalem. When the soldiers asked who he was, he responded, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' And in order to protect the friends who were with him, he added, 'If it's me you're after, let these others go.' When Jesus was being questioned by Pontius Pilate, the representative of the Roman Empire's authority, he told Pilate, 'My kingdom doesn't consist of what you see

around you. If it did, my followers would fight so that I wouldn't be handed over to the authorities. But I'm not that kind of king, not the world's kind of king.' Jesus refused to let his followers fight for his release, and this led him to be tortured to death on a Roman cross.

Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, and that he came back to life three days after his crucifixion. But even those who don't believe this, like Gandhi, can take inspiration from the humility which Jesus showed. Rather than use his power, the power he had as the Son of God, or as a man with many loyal followers, depending on your point of view, Jesus chose not to fight back. Unlike the Doctor, Jesus chose not to respond with clever quips or sarcastic remarks.

To choose humility is often the harder way. It can result in bloodless victories, like Mohammed at Mecca, Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King Jr in the USA. There is

often a high cost, and Gandhi, King, and Jesus all lost their lives in the struggle. But their examples have inspired many people to follow their example, to swallow pride and arrogance and to work for peace on this troubled planet of ours. 'A harsh word stirs up anger, but a soft answer turns away wrath.' Let's be inspired to go for the soft answer and build up peace in our homes, our neighbourhoods, and this school. Thank you.