

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Jumping to conclusions

**"When you jump to conclusions you often jump over the truth."**

*Anonymous*

Recorded in *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Samuel Johnson offers this advice:

*There is a wicked inclination in most people to suppose an old man decayed in his intellects. If a young or middle-aged man, when leaving a company, does not recollect where he has laid his hat, it is nothing; but if the same inattention is discovered in an old man, people will shrug their shoulders, and say, 'His memory is going.'*

We can reach the *wrong* conclusion all too readily. I was once phoned by a man who was looking for my help. His speech was slurred and he struggled to make himself understood. Because I knew something of the family's circumstances, I concluded he was the worse for drink, and I was immensely irritated that he'd bothered me in such an incoherent state. I told him I'd see him when he was more able to have a conversation. When I called at his home, I was horrified to discover that he'd recently had a Stoke which had left him with slurred speech. He hadn't touched alcohol for months.

I apologised as profusely as I could. I'd like to report that my apology was accepted, but I can't. I wasn't able to help the man or his family again, because jumping to the wrong conclusion had ruined any relationship we had.

### A prayer for today

*Lord, let my exercise today not consist of ... jumping to conclusions, running off my mouth, stretching the truth, pushing my own views, bending over backwards or side-stepping my responsibility. My life might be better if I did things differently.*

*Help me to get my faith – and my actions – fit for you. Amen*

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