

9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## Luck

**"Victory awaits [the one] who has everything in order – luck, people call it. Defeat is certain for [the one] who has neglected to take the necessary precautions in time – this is called bad luck."**

Roald Amundsen, *The South Pole* (1912)

My granny was a great one for superstitions. There were the usual ones ... like not walking under a ladder in case something bad happened, and throwing salt over your shoulder if you spilled any, so that good luck would follow. But there were others which may have been common in her day or just specific to my granny: "It's bad luck," she would say, "to put up an umbrella indoors." Why? I have no idea. Perhaps she felt it would be tempting fate and make it rain. "Never put shoes on a table," was another admonition, though I can't even *begin* to guess the origins of that one.

What superstitions do you have? No "answers on a postcard please," because I don't believe in luck at all. I once watched a snooker player make a marvellous shot, which seemed downright impossible. In an interview afterwards he was asked about his "lucky shot" by the interviewer, "a fluke", she suggested. The player smiled and replied, "I've spent *hundreds* of hours on the practice table to have such luck." I liked that.

Roald Amundsen, first to reach the South Pole, has it right. We make our own luck, just as that snooker player did with his hours of practice. "Victory", if that is how we label the successful outcome of an enterprise, is the result of "everything being in order." If the preparations are properly in place, we can do no more. What will happen thereafter will happen. People can call it good luck if they like. But it isn't. And if we *haven't* taken "the necessary precautions in time", how can we begin to expect an enterprise to go well? If it fails, people might call it "bad luck". But it isn't.

In his first letter to his young friend, Timothy (4:7) Paul says this:

*Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales;  
rather, train yourself to be godly.*

My granny, though far from being godless, should have heeded Paul's advice. If we got our godliness right, put that in order and took the necessary precautions in time, we wouldn't even *consider* superstitions, myths and luck. Now, where's that table where I can leave my shoes?

### A prayer for today

*Lord, let my godliness be in you, and in you alone. Amen*