



U2: Still Haven't Found

Alex Parks' debut release 'Maybe that's what it takes' totally frustrates me because it's a massive waste of her angsty driving vocals that led her to win Fame Academy this year. I guess the performance that really won me over to her was back in September with her reworking of the U2 classic 'Still haven't found (what I'm looking for)'. Hearing it again recently reminded me about the awesome power of the original version, released in 1987 from the album 'Joshua Tree' and also repackaged on the recent 'Best of: 1980-1990' (one of my most treasured albums!)

The Lyrics

Well the title says it all, really... The song is a reflection by Bono and his crazy kids about their deep longing for something that they haven't quite found yet... In the first few verses, it's a reflection of where Bono has come from, only to be left unfulfilled at the end of his journey:

'I have climbed the highest mountain / I have run through the fields / Only to be with you / Only to be with you... I have run, I have crawled / I have scaled these city walls / These city walls / Only to be with you... But I still haven't found what I'm looking for / But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.'

The only variation of theme is really in the last verse, where the lyrics begin to talk about belief rather than experience:

'I believe in the kingdom come / Then all the colours will bleed into one... You broke the bonds / And you loosed the chains / Carried the cross of my shame... You know I believe it'

And yet, Bono continues to sing that he hasn't found what he's looking for in all of this...

To think about

At the 'Worship' conference in Aylesbury, we were thinking a little bit about the season of Advent... it's a tricky one, really, because Advent is not only a time for joy and preparation but also a time for saying sorry. How do we go into Advent with the right frame of mind? Well, I reckon that 'I still haven't found what I'm looking for' says a load about how I might approach it this year....



Firstly, there's this idea of being sorry...

Parts of this song really are expressing the different lengths that we can go to to try and get fulfilment out of life... Not necessarily bad things, but also not where we'll ultimately find the fulfilment that we find in Jesus. I know for myself that whenever I go out, there's always that little thing at the back of my mind saying 'you'll feel better if you try to look better than everybody else'... and (needless to say!) I might scrub up ok sometimes, but I'm never gonna beat everybody around me in the looks department! At the end of it, I'm feeling unfulfilled by not trusting that God loves me no matter how I look.

In the same way that Bono recognises that he doesn't find true fulfilment in all the things that he's done, Advent is an awesome time for me to reflect on the (sometimes pretty negative) things that I've done to try and get my own fulfilment... and ultimately say sorry for them, so that we really can focus on the real life fulfilment we get in Jesus.

And to go hand in hand with this, there's this idea of preparation...

During Advent we're also looking forward to the 'kingdom come'... at the time of Christ's birth, Zechariah (John the Baptist's dad) sings this wicked song about how Christ is the fulfilment of all the preparation in the Old Testament (look it up in Luke 1:68-79). Similarly, we are preparing ourselves to welcome Christ in a new way our hearts.

In the same way that Bono believes all the stuff about the 'kingdom come' and yet he still hasn't quite found it all, I often find myself in the same place as Doubting Thomas when he says to Jesus: 'Lord, I believe; heal my unbelief!'... where I am sometimes is this weird meeting place between what I believe in my head and what I believe in my heart. In a special way during this season, we can ask the Holy Spirit to come and prepare us for Christ, so that my head knowledge about Jesus can become heart knowledge!

To do

I find that reading a book that might help me to prepare for Christmas is a really positive way of opening myself up to a deeper level of relationship with Jesus. One that I would really recommend is '*What's so Amazing about Grace?*' by Philip

Yancey. Alternatively, you might want to grab a copy of The Youth Bible, or another easier translation, and read through one whole book, perhaps using some study notes.

I really have to force myself to go to Reconciliation sometimes - it's totally embarrassing, and can be a lot harder than sweeping things under the carpet. However, I always come out feeling better about stuff, and like I've been forgiven in a special kind of way. How about going along to a reconciliation service or confession at your local church this Advent?

To pray

The prayer that your priest might pray at the beginning of the first Sunday Mass of this Advent goes a little like this (not the exact words!):

Father, I recognise that my heart and mind are sometimes cold compared to the warmth of your love, and dark compared to your light! This Advent, prepare me for Jesus's coming by deepening my love for him, so that when Christmas comes around I can be truly joyful and ready for this light! Amen