

A Faith to Live By...

Sermons on the Apostles' Creed

5. "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended to the dead..."



Suffered under Pontius Pilate...

It's been said that this clause of the creed contains every civil servant's nightmare! 'Suffered under Pontius Pilate ...' – one man's public misdemeanor or mistake recorded for posterity and, no matter what his other accomplishments, becoming what will be associated with his name and his term of office forever. Pontius Pilate, the man who represented the authority of the Roman Empire, into whose hands Jesus' fate was fleetingly placed, who had the power to choose life or death. Pontius Pilate, the man who swithered back and forth, unsure what he should do, finally capitulating to the political manipulating of the Jewish authorities in order to preserve his already fragile career, his hands therefore identifiably soiled with responsibility for Jesus' execution, but who sought (in a very public gesture) to wash his hands of the whole situation. Perhaps, if Pilate's involvement in Jesus' story had



been confined to the gospel texts, he might have enjoyed less notoriety, his part in that story being swallowed up by the parts played by so many others. It is this inclusion of his name so prominently in a formulary intended to summarize the essentials of Christian believing

(the only human name other than Jesus' own) which has, over the centuries, kept it alive and kicking in public consciousness.

So why include it? Why pick on Pilate, as it were? Well, the reason almost certainly has nothing to do with his particular role in the narrative of Jesus' final few days. It's not because his vacillation and hypocrisy are to be judged any worse than Judas's betrayal, Peter's denial, or the bloodlust of the crowds who bayed for his crucifixion. It is simply that Pilate's career provides a straightforward and easy way to anchor the event of Jesus' death in history, his term of office being conveniently and authoritatively recorded in the annals of Roman government. It reminds us that the story of Jesus is not one that we can treat as having happened 'once upon a time' (or a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...), let alone ending with everyone living 'happily ever after'. Those are

the literary devices beloved of fairy-tale and fable and other imaginative constructs, stories which are powerful and deal with truth, but which eschew any claim to document anything which actually happened



anywhere to anyone in particular. They are often about 'the sorts of thing which might happen', or the clothing with imaginative flesh of general human hopes, aspirations, fears and truths. And the 'once upon a time' openings are there as a literary disclaimer, to remind us of that.

What this clause of the creed reminds us, though, is that the gospel is *not* like that. It's not the distillation of some ancient human wisdom which transcends time and place; it is earthed, anchored, grounded in things that actually happened at a particular time and place, and offers an interpretation of the *meaning* of those events. 'Under Pontius Pilate' is the sort of information that a historian can work with, enabling us to date Jesus' execution to somewhere between 26 and 36 CE, the years of Pilate's term as procurator of Judea. It tells us that the gospel is not a set of

religious ideas or moral imperatives which Jesus taught, but which might equally well have been communicated by someone else; instead it concerns claims about God coming among us and sharing in our history, acting and being acted upon in our history, doing and suffering things which can be pinned down to a particular



time and place. That Jesus of Nazareth 'suffered under Pontius Pilate' can be documented reliably from various sources, including the creed. Of course, the *significance* of the events is a different sort of thing, lying beyond the proper scope of what historians can tell us. But, as historical happening, the story of

Jesus' passion and death is well attested. This, it has been pointed out, is the one clause of the creed that even a devout atheist should be able to say with integrity!

But the creed makes an odd leap here, we might notice. It takes us straight from the birth of Jesus to his last hours and his death, which is, I take it, what the phrase 'suffered' here primarily refers to. In its eagerness to pin Jesus on the map of history, it passes over in silence the whole of Jesus' ministry, as though that were simply an interesting preamble to the main event. Now, it's true enough that the gospels give a seemingly disproportionate amount of space to coverage of the events of what we typically refer to as the 'passion' story, and this clearly indicates that this part of

Jesus' story is of momentous importance and in some sense is where the centre of gravity lies in any adequate answer to the question 'what did Jesus come to do?' But the three years or so of ministry that begins with Jesus' baptism by John can hardly be dismissed as insignificant,



even in relative terms. In fact, I'd want to go further and say that we won't really be able to make much constructive sense of Jesus' death and its meaning if we isolate it from all that preceded it, treating the ministry and the passion as two hermetically

sealed units rather than seeing them as organically connected. In this sense, I think it's important to say that Jesus' 'suffering for our sins' begins not in the Garden of Gethsemane (or wherever, for convenience, we take the 'passion story' to begin), but



at the outset of his public ministry, and perhaps much earlier than that. The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 seems to me much more adequate in this respect than the Apostles' Creed, the usefulness of Pilate as a historical marker notwithstanding: 'What do you understand by the word "Suffered"? That all the time of his life on earth, but especially at the end of it, he bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race'.

Perhaps we need to pause at this point and unpack something of that term 'wrath', an English term which jars our modern sensibilities and perhaps connotes all sorts of dark and apparently problematic things we would prefer not to associate with God at all. No doubt some of the problematic connotations can and need to be stripped away. One online dictionary offers us the following range of meanings: *anger, rage, fury, annoyance, indignation, outrage, pique, spleen, chagrin, vexation, exasperation, high dudgeon, bad temper, displeasure, disgruntlement, cantankerousness, querulousness, and snappishness*. None of those seems really to capture the sense that 'wrath' bears in Scripture, either because they are too readily associated with human behaviours we typically hold to be problematic, or because they hardly seem to gauge the seriousness of what 'wrath' refers to. 'Anger' is perhaps the most sanitized rendering in modern translations, but even it falls short of catching the almost visceral force of



'wrath'. 'Rage' or 'outrage' come closer, but as applied to humans (even the most well-adjusted!) these easily evoke sorts of responses that we might suppose inappropriate for God. The answer, though, is not to tone down the force of the

word 'wrath', but instead to disentangle it somewhat from the predominantly emotional meanings of some of its supposed synonyms. God's wrath is, no doubt, analogous in some ways to the forceful emotional responses we have in the face of certain things; but it's also quite distinct from those responses, and, if anything, more forceful than any of them. We might usefully think of it like this: God's 'wrath' is that in God which is *utterly opposed* to evil – even the slightest trace of evil – evil itself being not so much something that angers God as a force that is radically incompatible with all that God is, which is 'anti-matter' to God's 'matter', which, as the Scots theologian P. T. Forsyth suggests, presents a genuine *threat* to God's existence, were God not determined and finally able to eradicate it. Evil is not an irritant: it is that which contradicts and threatens God's being, and God cannot and will not finally co-exist with it but has committed himself to purging it from his world – not just for our sake, but for God's own sake. And, in the meanwhile, while he does and must co-exist with its presence in the world, he *suffers* its presence.

Now, if we think of God's 'wrath' or his relationship to sin and evil in this way, we can begin to see what it might mean for this same God to commit himself to enter into his world humanly, to take our 'flesh' and dwell among us, participant in the relationships, the institutions, the experiences that make up life in a sinful world affected from top to bottom by the taint and the influences of evil. We can begin to understand how simply being in the world in its fallen state would, for one whose character, whose moral and spiritual sensibilities are perfectly attuned to God's own (because they *are* God's own moral and spiritual sensibilities in human version),



already be an experience of 'suffering' the sins of the world quite unique in human terms.

Human analogies can only take us so far and risk collapsing into flippancy; but think of the way someone with a finely-tuned musical ear responds almost viscerally to the dire

screechings of an amateur string ensemble, or

the way someone unusually squeamish reacts when confronted with gore and guts on the cinema screen. These are things, we might properly say, that they 'cannot

bear,' that elicit responses which others do not share, responses of genuine distress and discomfort which others may not understand. How much more distress and discomfort, we might ask ourselves, would one who views and hears and feels things in the world not with our dulled moral and spiritual sensibilities, but with God's own – God for whom even the slightest shred of evil is unbearable, a threat to all that he is and all that he has promised his world will finally be. Simply to *be* 'God incarnate', then, is, we might suppose, to suffer dreadfully. And in Jesus, of course, God does not simply *observe* this world of sin. He is plunged into it and entangled in its webs, forced to wrestle and to struggle with it, to be victorious over it only one painful and difficult moment at a time. That's the point of Jesus' baptism being followed immediately by his departure into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan – a wrestling with the forces of evil which begins here and continues all the way to the crucifixion where, as he dies, Jesus is able to utter those highly charged words 'it is finished!' Not '*I* am finished', but '*it* is finished'. Job done! The struggle with sin and evil, his 'bearing' on his shoulders of the heavy load of human sin through his life and onto the cross, is here at last complete, and he can and does hand his life over to the Father knowing that he has done what needed to be done to change the course of humankind's relationship with God for ever.



So, the suffering of Jesus during Holy Week and his death on Calvary are the climax, the culmination of what he came to do. But they are not a largely unrelated 'bolt-on' to the package of his ministry, but the organic extension and natural conclusion of a life and ministry in which sin was already being borne and suffered for, and victory over the forces of evil and death already being worked out in Jesus' struggle and obedience. They belong together. And the heart of Jesus' suffering even on 'Good Friday' was not merely physical, but spiritual. It had to do with the impact upon

him, as God incarnate, of this darkest moment of all, when the forces of evil were most fully at work and most clearly ranged against him and threatening to swallow him up in death – sin’s final weapon – and so triumph over him. That he fathomed this terrible prospect is clear from those other words recorded by Matthew and Mark: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ But at the cross, as at the baptism, we are invited to imagine the Father’s words: ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased’.

From a different angle the insistence that Christ, and in him God, suffered is important because it tells us that God is not remote from or unacquainted with the sorts of suffering – often dreadful suffering – that his sentient creatures typically experience in life. The scale of suffering in God’s world is one of the biggest problems for believers and unbelievers alike when it comes to making sense of the world, and of the claim that God is its creator and sustainer. This is a topic for another occasion, but we need at least to recognize that the God people often say they ‘cannot believe in’ is generally not the God of the Bible, who is known most fully and completely in his determination to share with us up to the hilt in the very worst of our suffering (the sort of suffering that ironically evokes the epithet ‘god-forsaken’) in order to sustain us through it and to break its hold over us. This is a God who is never closer to us than he is in the midst of our seeming ‘god-forsakenness’, and it has no power to distance us from him. He has been there before us, and he goes there with us.

Was crucified, died, and was buried...

That Jesus was crucified on Pilate’s watch is familiar to everyone. It is a fact reflected in the symbol of the cross, which has over the centuries adorned Christian architecture, clerical garments, the ceremonial utensils used in worship, jewelry, and now a host of consumer items sold online and in Christian bookshops including mugs, bible covers, tote bags and almost anything anyone could care to buy.

To some extent the form of Jesus’ dying is simply a function of the context in which he was arrested and tried, and the charges of which he was found guilty. Crucifixion

was not invented by the Romans, but the Roman Empire used it as a way of disposing of those it had reason to fear most – not just day to day criminals, but insurgents, political thugs, and anyone who might be perceived as a threat to its rule, especially in the occupied territories. Just a century before Jesus was executed the revolt against Rome led by the escaped slave and gladiator Spartacus was put down by the legions of Cassius, and it is reported that six thousand of those rebels



who survived the battle were crucified in a line stretching along the Appian Way, some 190 kilometres between Capua and Rome! It was a radical and cruel exercise in deterrence. Its victims died horribly slowly, usually from suffocation, as the

weight of their own bodies gradually squeezed life out of them, until, as John records of Jesus, they ‘breathed their last’. In the meanwhile, though, the whole portfolio of human barbarism was played out in inventive and sickening variations of torture, and the heat and the flies and the crows and the dogs also worked their own peculiar brand of unpleasantness. As one writer puts it, no one who actually saw crucifixion would ever have thought about turning it into a piece of architecture or jewelry, or a logo for a tote bag. And Jesus, of course, was charged with sedition. He was presented to Pilate as a pretender to the throne of Israel, and so a direct challenge to the authority of Caesar. And so, once it became clear that Jesus wasn’t going to deny the charges, and that neither the crowds nor the Jewish authorities would rest content with Jesus being beaten up in the cells, Pilate assented to what was the normal punishment for his alleged crimes, a punishment that denied the humanity of its victims, and no doubt destroyed something of the humanity of those who inflicted it, as participation in degrading violence and evil generally does.

At the human level, then, Jesus suffered this peculiarly degrading and dehumanizing form of death because it was the one his alleged ‘crime’ deserved. But in terms of God’s purposes we can perhaps read rather more into it than that. That

God should become a man and dwell amongst us in order to identify with and to bear the price of our sin, and in order to identify with and redeem us from our suffering and our subjection to death perhaps makes it appropriate that he should die not the quick, 'clean' death of other forms of execution available to Roman 'justice', but find himself the victim of the most barbaric form of execution known in his day. No doubt there are other, more painful ways to die; and we should not get hung up on the question of the 'amount' of suffering Jesus' death entailed, as though



such a calculus were even possible. But that he died in solidarity with all the victims of man's worst inhumanity to man nonetheless has a theological charge that should not be overlooked. That God was

willing to allow himself to become such a victim, and to do so for our sakes tells us all that we need to know about the character of God's love.

Jesus' death is the climactic point of a divine action which, Christians believe, took place 'for us' and 'for our sins'. His death wasn't just the inevitable outcome of his behavior and its provocation of the Jewish authorities. It is something that Jesus knew lay before him as the final step of his 'obedience' to his heavenly Father, something that *had* to happen if the power of human sin was to be broken, and human beings reconciled and restored to their proper relationship with God, 'put right' with God, and given a fresh start. Again, don't forget that this isn't a 'take it or leave it' circumstance, as though God could simply decide to restore us willy-nilly, by divine fiat. Sin and evil are a far more serious matter than that. And if they are to be dealt with, and dealt with in such a way that opens up and creates the opportunity for the 'new' or 'eternal' life that God promises and Jesus is said to bring, then it would seem that the whole history of Jesus' suffering and struggling with sin that is implicit in the very fact of his being God in 'enemy territory' as C. S. Lewis has it, which reaches a pitch in his public ministry, and reaches its climax as he hands himself over to be abused, tortured and executed is *necessary*. It had to

happen like this, or else sin and evil would remain and retain their grip on and their hold over God's human creatures.

The *death* of Jesus in particular is said in Scripture to be necessary to this process. Perhaps this is to some extent because, as we have seen, his death is the climactic point in and seals and completes a dynamic that is present in the whole trajectory of his incarnate existence. So, his 'death' or sometimes his 'blood' can and do serve usefully as a symbol of what is a wider pattern of Jesus' action and experience. *How* his suffering and death accomplishes and establishes this divinely purposed redemption of humankind is a further question, and as Lewis again notes, it is a



question to which a variety of different answers have been given over the centuries, none of which is essential to Christian faith. *That* it did so, he insists, is *the central Christian belief*, enshrined in our liturgies, our hymnody, and much else besides. That is why the cross is the central Christian symbol, referring us again and again to this suffering and death as the place where the trajectory of human history was turned around, something done by God which left nothing the same as it had been previously. Without it, and without the resurrection from the dead which followed and placed God's seal of approval and promise upon it, the world would be left in a perilous state.

The theological shorthand for this 'happening' or this divine action that puts us right with God and creates a new beginning for human life with God is 'atonement'. To ask how it 'works' is to ask a good question, and one in response to which Scripture encourages us a number of different images to work with – i.e. answers to the question 'what is it like?' Because, of course, we can only ever understand anything by being able to grasp 'what it is like', and how it differs from other things. That's why Jesus begins so much of his teaching with a direct appeal to imaginative comparisons and analogies – 'to what shall we liken the Kingdom of God'. Well, he

tells his hearers, it's a bit like a woman who, when emptying the Hoover bag, discovers an ear-ring she has found! Or, it's a bit like a mustard seed that grows so quickly and so large that it has the gardener reaching for the systemic weed-killer! Of course, in all sorts of ways it's not like those things at all. But each gives us a glimpse, and perhaps more than a glimpse, of some part of the reality of God's kingdom, something in our experience that it can be likened to. And Scripture does something similar when it comes to the atonement. It works with metaphors and similes. So, for instance, Jesus' suffering and death are likened to some of the



sacrifices that took place in the Jerusalem temple. There's something very important that it has in common with these, we are led to suppose, though we can and should accept that it is also very different from them in other ways. So, too, the atonement is

sometimes pictured in forensic or legal terms, as a matter of justice in which a penalty prescribed by law is meted out. Again, we are to suppose that what occurs between Jesus and his Father and Jesus and humankind has something in common with these complex human realities, but that in other ways it will differ from them quite significantly. I have already mentioned the image of 'paying a debt', or paying the price' for human sin, the latter image in particular being linked to another – the breaking of fetters and being set free from sin. The 'redemption price' in ancient Israel was the price someone might pay in order to release a relative or friend from the institution of slavery. And being liberated from bondage to sin is a further image with which the New Testament writers work in drawing close to the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death, what it is 'like'.

The key here, I think, is to acknowledge that *none* of these images offers us an *explanation* of what the atonement actually is and how it works. Each of them offers at best a partial imaginative grasp on its reality. But each, we may suppose, points us appropriately to some aspect of what goes on here, and taken together the images perhaps grant us as good an approach to the reality, partial and patchy though it

may be, as we can reasonably expect. After all, when it comes to asking how God relates to evil, and how he has determined to deal with it and to fulfil his purpose in creation, we are in pretty deep water, and might reasonably expect there to be a high quotient of mystery attaching to it. Various more systematic ‘theories’ of the atonement, claiming to explain its mechanics, mostly begin with these biblical images, but end up neglecting some in order to privilege others, and pressing those they prefer way beyond the scope of their biblical roots. We may find one or more of them helpful (though I tend to be suspicious of ‘theories’ in this context); but Christian faith doesn’t entail endorsing any of them in particular. It is enough to believe that Jesus’ suffering and death were necessary, and that they were embraced for our sake and for God’s sake, that sins might be forgiven and new life bestowed upon us. Although as a theologian I have often been compelled to reckon at length with bold explanations of one sort or another, as I get older (and, who knows, possibly wiser...) I have come to appreciate more the implicit intellectual humility of Lewis’s imaginative treatment of the matter in *The Lion, the Witch and the*



Wardrobe, where Aslan meets with the White Witch and agrees to allow himself to be put to death on the Stone Table in place of Edmund, a grisly trade-off that will appease the ‘Deep Magic’. Aslan’s resurrection to life and his victory over the forces of the Witch is contingent on all this happening, we later realize; but there is no attempt to theorize how that ‘worked’. Nor is there any need for

such theorizing in order to rejoice in the outcome and its implications. When it comes to the meaning of the atonement, we may sometimes wish to go further in our reckoning with it than its imaginative representations in Scripture; but if we do, we should tread very carefully indeed, and make sure we continue to return to those imaginative likenesses (all of them together, and not just some of them), and ask what they caution us against thinking and saying, as well as what they encourage



and permit us to think and say. This is holy ground, and human hubris would be an ironic thing to erect upon it.

The cruciformity of Jesus' death is not only related to the wider shape and pattern of his life and ministry by the New Testament; it is also related directly to the nature of faith and discipleship, and what it is reasonable for Christians to expect and to pursue in their 'following' of Jesus. Lots of different passages could be cited here, but we'll look briefly at just one. 1 Peter 2 verses 20 to 25 read as follows: 'If you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth". When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls'. There is far too much here to get to grips with now. But certain things are fairly apparent. Some ways of talking about the atonement suggest that at the heart of it Jesus does something 'instead of us' and something that we cannot do. And I think that's true and important. But here we see a different part of the truth – that far from Jesus suffering and dying so that we might *not have to* suffer and die, his suffering and death were precisely *to enable us* to suffer and die as we follow in his footsteps.



Indeed, we might say that part of what sets him apart from us and makes his suffering and death unique is its capacity, as the suffering and death of God, to be *generative* of ours, as we are united ever more fully to him by the Holy Spirit. As we grow

more like him, so we, too, begin to 'suffer' sin in the world and in ourselves (as well as continuing to commit it), coming to see things as God sees them, to feel things as

God feels them, our moral and spiritual lives being re-orientated until our familiar bearings no longer grant us any stability or guidance. As the Spirit infuses us with the life and the 'power' of Christ's obedience, we, too, will increasingly find ourselves at odds with the world and its values, and participation in its shared institutions and practices will begin to chafe at points like an ill-fitting shoe until we are raw. And, as we find ourselves compelled from within by the work of Christ's Spirit to eschew the world's ways of thinking and behaving, we, too, will find ourselves increasingly dis comforted and tormented by the responses of others, should expect not acclaim, popularity and success, but scorn, rejection and failure as the probable outcomes of our faithfulness. But, as Peter says, 'to this we were called', and for this, that we too might live cruciform lives, dying to sin daily that we might live to God, Christ bore our sins in his body on the cross. Not so that we might not have to bear the cross – but precisely so that we might bear it day in and day out. Indeed, the apostle Paul puts it more strongly, insisting that because Jesus was none other than God himself, who had united us to himself in 'taking flesh', in a very real



and important sense we have already been crucified, in Christ's own death, and all that remains now is for this suffering and death to be worked out in the circumstances of our particular lives through his power at work in us, so that we shall also share in the glory of his resurrection. (See, e.g., Romans 6:5-6; Galatians 2:20; 6:5).

As strap-lines for marketing strategies or recruitment drives go, 'take up your cross and follow me' is one of the more unlikely. But it's the only one Jesus offers us. And the extent and nature of our suffering (as individuals, as a congregation) and not health, wealth and success is what is offered to us as the most reliable gauge of our faithfulness in doing so.

He descended to the dead...

In the Jewish understanding of Jesus' day the place of the dead was *Hades* (in Greek) or *Sheol* (in Hebrew), a shadowy underworld, an insubstantial place where the dead

were thought to go while they awaited the coming Day of the Lord with its final judgment. We get glimpses of it in the Old Testament. So, for example, Psalm 6 tell us that those in *Sheol* were in some sense cut off from proper relationship with God, 'For in death', the psalmist writes, 'there is no remembrance of you; in *Sheol* who can give you praise?' On the other hand Psalm 139 points out that *Sheol* is certainly within God's reach, and no one should presume that by fleeing there they can escape from God: 'Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? ... if I make my bed in *Sheol*, you are there'. Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus gives us a more colourful depiction (though it is precisely a parable, an imaginative tale told to make a spiritual and moral point, so we shouldn't build too much on it theologically!). Here, although *Sheol*/Hades should not, I think, be identified with the Christian idea of 'hell' (which is a place of separation from God where the impenitent wicked are dispatched for eternity to receive punishment for their sins), it may have been imagined as a place where the good and the wicked were billeted separately rather than mixed up together, the lot of the wicked there being one best avoided.

The addition of this clause, 'he descended to the dead', to the creed may simply have been a way of underlining the fact that Jesus had actually shared to the full in human death, rather than being snatched back from it at the last minute or (as some Jewish propagandists had been known to suggest) had never really died at all, but merely fainted, and therefore was not 'raised from the dead'. It really means 'he descended to the place of the dead' - i.e., went to *Sheol*/Hades as all humans were believed to do when they die.

Pictured in this way, the circumstance naturally invites the question what Jesus was doing in



between his 'descent' and his resurrection on the Sunday morning. It was this

question, and appeal to various bits and pieces of New Testament text in seeking an answer, which led in due course to the medieval doctrine of a 'Harrowing of Hell' – the claim that Jesus had descended to the place where the dead were imprisoned, and had broken 'Hell' open in order to set them free – an application of the power of his atoning life and death to those who might have been thought beyond its reach – i.e. those who had died prior to its accomplishment and the preaching of the 'good news'. The biblical 'bits and pieces' are texts such as Matthew 16:18; 1 Peter 3:19-20, Ephesians 4:8-10, and Revelation 1:17-18. While there are all sorts of questions posed by this doctrine (which some Christians baulk at), at the very least it affords an imaginative way of extrapolating from the biblical insistence that in his suffering and death Christ has broken the power and the hold of sin and death, has done so for all, and that the 'place of death' need no longer hold any fear for those who put their trust in him. If we prefer, though, we can say this clause of the creed with impunity, intending by it no more than its original drafters probably did: viz, that Jesus was crucified, died, buried, and went wherever it is that the dead go – because he really was dead, and not faking it!

