

Thought for the Day 27th May - John Reed

Read Ephesians 3:14-19

The headline reads “Couple spend two years renovating cottage to raffle it off for £5.”¹

Wow! I thought. That’s a fantastically generous, charitable act! What motivated this couple in North Wales to sell something they’ve laboured two years for at a give-away price?

Of course, as you read on it doesn’t take long to realise that they’re not selling the house for £5 at all. They’re selling raffle tickets at £5 each – and they hope to sell 80,000 tickets. So, they’re actually wanting to sell the house for £400,000. Which sounds like a much more reasonable price (given that I don’t really know the real estate market in North Wales!).

Nonetheless, one lucky ticket buyer *will* win a house for 5. And money will go to charity.

Although, apparently not £400,000 will go to charity. At the very bottom of the article, we’re told that the couple are asking people who enter the “competition” to donate an extra £1 to The Children’s Society, which they will then match – if they hit their target total. So, most generous scenario, the couple get £400,000 and then give £80,000 of it to charity. If they don’t get their £400,000, it seems that they’re not giving any of it to charity (I could be reading it wrong, but it looks that way).

Now, please don’t get me wrong. I admire what the couple are doing. I’ve never sold a house and given away 20% of the proceeds to charity. Well done them, I say!

If I’m disappointed, it’s with whoever wrote the article, which leads one to think first that this couple are giving away the fruit of two years’ labour for £5, and then that all of the proceeds are going to charity.

Of course, they had to sell the story, and to do that they had to come up with an enticing headline and opening paragraph. It happens all the time.

But because we encounter that kind of misleading headline writing all the time, we have learned to be cynical. As the old adage says, “If it seems to be too good to be true, it probably is.”

But when it comes to God and his grace, the opposite is true. It’s not that the reality is more disappointing than the opening line says. The fact is, the reality is *better* and *richer* and *deeper*. And so Paul prays that we might be given the strength to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth of it of this love that surpasses knowledge.

¹ <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/weird-news/couple-spend-two-years-renovating-22078303>