

# Sunday Thought

1<sup>st</sup> May 2022 Third Sunday of Easter

## Readings

Acts 9: 1 – 6 (7 – 20)  
Psalm 30  
Revelation 5: 11 - 14  
John 21: 1 - 19

## Christian Life Synopsis

The scriptures for today prompt so many thoughts and each will be rewarded with re-reading and meditation. However, putting these passages together – to think of Saul's dramatic conversion, of disciples developing their relationship with Jesus and of John's vision of heaven – they provide a wonderful synopsis of Christian life.



The phrase, 'a damascene conversion' has become equated in many people's thoughts with a general 'light bulb moment' without realising its special meaning for the Christian believer. Comparatively few people begin their Christian life in such a dramatic way as the young Jewish scholar, the aspiring religious teacher and leader, Saul from Tarsus. His was more than a 'light bulb' moment! It was a blinding light from the skies accompanied by a voice from heaven. Blind, and nursing bruises after the indignity of falling from a horse in front of inferiors is not the commonest way to discover faith in Jesus as *the Lord*, the Son of God! However, 'conversion' still describes the acceptance of Jesus and his Kingdom Way as the beginning of real, in earnest, Christian life. The actual experience is unique to every individual, which is astounding considering how many billions of us there are. It could be a response to a preacher's challenge or a heart-warming conviction that Jesus is for real and is alive, entering my life and changing its direction. Sometimes it's the recognition of wrongdoing followed by a cry for help, forgiveness, and a new beginning in the strength of the Holy Spirit. For some it could be a quiet realisation, after years of living in a church environment, when Jesus becomes real – 'Yes, I do believe!' and 'I'm ready to learn more, to go deeper, to live more closely to God!' Whatever the details of our encounter with God in Christ, it will be personal, linking us with the fellowship of others in a church family and it may well be followed by an awareness of the Lord's call to a particular role within that community.

Through the years I have spent many hours reading *John's* account of Jesus' third resurrection appearance to seven of his disciples after a failed fishing trip. It resulted from Peter's restless impatience when they followed Jesus' instruction to wait for him back home in Galilee. It was not in Peter's nature to just wait. He had to do something, and with his boat moored at the lakeside, what else? 'I'm going fishing!' The others joined him, maybe fearful lest Jesus come, and like Thomas they would miss out if they were not all together.

Their mis-timed exercise was a failure until a stranger on the shore helped them find a catch right close to them. As with Saul's story there is the question, 'Who is it?' and the answer, 'It's the Lord!' What followed during and after breakfast with Jesus is a resume of common intimate moments with God for every Christian – an increasing knowledge of who he is and what he offers to us, of his care and provision for our needs, of his all-embracing love and peace plus much more. Then, especially for Peter, - though all of them had failed their Master – it was time to put things right. We will recognise similar moments of realising the Lord's disappointment with what we have done in life so far and then, humbly, we realise the eternal grace which bears it all with us and for us - like individual hammer blows to a wooden cross. Best of all that morning by the lake, was Jesus' renewed acceptance and commission for them all. They were to share life together and look out for each other in fellowship. There were special assignments for Peter and John (v22) as there could be for each of us. Every disciple will have a personal life and future, planned by the Lord.

That leads us on to the picture from John's revelation – an amazing description of worship in heaven. Many of us would confess to the *Hallelujah Chorus* being a favourite piece from Handel's oratorio, *The Messiah*. I prefer the final chorus, 'Worthy is the Lamb' in which Handel captures the excited wonder of John and the glory of heaven which is the continuation of the Christian life. Although we are only able to express spiritual truth in human words, I imagine a time when I may kneel in a corner at the back of the chorus and see the vast array of choirs. Angels! Thousands of them! Billions, around the throne of God, singing, 'Worthy is the lamb to receive praise and honour, glory and might' ... It is impossible for us to imagine the scene, but John with help from Handel, gives us a 'clip' – a glorious preview.



All this discipleship adventure is ours, assured through Jesus, his life, his death, and his resurrection – and our personal faith in him who is worthy. 'Hallelujah!'

A Prayer of Thanks (with Psalm 30 in mind)



Lord, Jesus Christ, I have so much to thank you for.  
I want to live my life praising you,  
because you are my Lord, my God, and are in control of my life.  
I was afraid when life seemed to be falling apart:  
I thought you had left me, but you were there,  
forgiving, healing and restoring me.

My fears fell away as you changed my sadness into joy.  
Morning brought happiness when the night tears were gone.  
My guilt at offending your love, you forgive in a moment,  
but your love and goodness lasts for a life-time.

[www.friendshipfiles.com/sunday-thought](http://www.friendshipfiles.com/sunday-thought)