

Sunday Thought

25th April 2021 Fourth Sunday of Easter

Readings

Acts 4: 5 - 12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16 – 24

John 10: 11 - 18

The Answer is Jesus



Brian never missed one session of the Children's Holiday Club. He shared enthusiastically in the games, creative activities, refreshments and the story-time. The Bible story-teller would often ask questions to ascertain how well her audience had been listening. Brian's hand was always the first to be raised – sometimes even before he had heard the complete enquiry. When others, equally enthusiastic, began to press their hands high in the air, hoping to be noticed first, Brian could not resist shouting out his answer. He had one answer to all the questions - '*Jesus!*' Miss. Years later I still wonder if Brian ever went to the races – he had a very good reckoning of 'the odds'! He would have done well with today's scripture readings. They are peppered with questions and almost everyone has the same answer – *Jesus!*

Peter and John in the post-resurrection account in Acts are facing interrogation by a religious court at the High Priest's quarters in Jerusalem after spending a night in the Temple jail. The Court wanted to know about their part in the healing of a lame man in the Temple precincts, though their real concern was the opposition party – the Sadducees who did not believe in resurrection after death. So, the priests were intent on stopping the divisive teaching about Jesus' return to life after the Cross by discrediting the apostles. They asked them three questions about the healing event in the Temple: *How did you do it? What power do you have? By whose name and in whose authority did you do this in God's house?* There was one answer to all three questions – '*Jesus! He did it through us! We have his power just as he promised. We did it in his Name because salvation – healing – the power of love and peace – is for everyone who believes in him!*' They went on to claim that Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour – God's answer to a sick world full of questions. *And you got it all wrong* they told the court. *You crucified him. But God raised him to life again.* The evidence for their statement was taking place everywhere in the City, where the emerging Christian community had grown by five thousand new members in a single day!

Questions follow in the favourite Shepherd Psalm, and the answer is the same - "The Lord is everything I need." *Where can I find inner peace? How can I get through the dark days which crowd me in like a frightening, narrow ravine? How can I keep my life on a straight path? How do I know God loves me? How can I be sure of heaven and eternal life? The answer? Jesus! The Lord!*

John, in his letter from Ephesus raises similar questions. *How do we know what love is? Why should we love others? How can we be sure God answers our prayers in the way that is best for us and for those for whom we pray? ... and even more questions for which the answer is, 'Jesus!'*

Young Brian taught me a good lesson. Whatever my life-questions I will always find an answer if I start with Jesus – with God – and relate his life and teaching to my contemporary situation. We do this best in our ministry to one another in the fellowship of the Church.

A Prayer *[with Psalm 23 in mind]*

*Lord, I know there are many times when I really act like a sheep;
Bleating about things I don't understand;
Always looking for better pastures;
Fearful of threatening circumstances;
Wandering off the right path
and needing a rod and staff prod to bring me back.*

*But I know you are the best Shepherd.
You keep your promise to provide everything I need,
From quiet rest and assured correction to having your best things in life;
And all in a never-ending bundle of faithful love.*

Thank you, Lord.

