

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 157

Sunday 8th May 2022

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday's edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

Scripture Passages

Acts 9: 36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay."

³⁹ So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them.

⁴⁰ Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. ⁴² This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

⁴³ Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

John 10: 22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³ and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon.

²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

²⁵ Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; ²⁶ but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.

No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand.

³⁰ The Father and I are one."

Reflection

In this Easter season, we consider the impact of Christ's resurrection, the supreme example of God's miraculous work.

And as we consider this perhaps it might prompt in us the response 'If only we had been there...' If we are struggling with our faith we might think that if we had been alive in those days our path to faith might have been easier. For if we had seen miracles with our very own eyes how could faith and trust in Jesus not inevitably be sparked off and strengthened?

And we might have been struck by the story of Thomas which we looked at a couple of weeks ago. Thomas refused to believe until Jesus met his very bold and direct demand to put his hands into His side and to see the marks of the nails. And we might think that Thomas' equally bold and direct response of faith to this, My Lord and my God, was inevitable. How could Thomas have possibly responded in any other way? And if we had been in his position how could we have possibly responded in any other way?

And yet seeing does not always result in believing...

Take, for instance, the opposition to Jesus and His message which we learn about in today's reading from John's gospel.

These opponents are unimpressed by Jesus and His claims. There is a note of challenge and an underlying lack of trust in their question, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

But we need to remember that these people had had ample opportunities to come to faith and trust in Jesus through the miracles which had happened in front of their very eyes. For instance, Jesus had performed an extraordinary miracle of healing a man who had been born blind. But even though they had seen this man who could now see perfectly well they had refused to believe the evidence of their own eyes. Some people questioned whether this man was in fact the same person as the blind man who used to sit on the ground and beg. Or was it someone else who just happened to look like the same man?

And even when the man's parents confirm that this person is indeed their son who used to be blind and who now sees they still continue to question what has happened. Indeed they become hardened in their lack of belief in Jesus stating aggressively, 'We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' (John. 9:29).

And so Jesus confronts their lack of faith. Even though they have been given plenty of evidence with their own eyes they simply do not believe in Him.

And Jesus makes another clear statement of His divinity when He says, 'The Father and I are one.' But while Thomas makes this form of confession when he sees the miracle of the resurrection for himself these opponents

simply refuse to accept Jesus' claims no matter how clear the evidence they have been given.

For miracles which do not result in faith do not change lives. Miracles do not bypass the need for faith. Rather faith remains essential. Jesus reminds us in this gospel passage that faith is not primarily about intellectual knowledge but is a matter of relationship. Using the metaphor of the sheep and shepherd He reminds us of the importance of hearing God's voice for ourselves, of being known by Jesus and following Him.

For this will result in eternal life, an entirely new quality and dimension of life and in the security of knowing that we belong to Jesus for ever. Not even death is able to take this away from us.

Our reading from Acts also explores the relationship between miraculous healing and faith. The context for this is the apostle Peter's healing of Dorcas.

An urgent request has been sent from some disciples in a town called Lydda for Peter to come without delay. A key member of their congregation, the widow Dorcas, has died. Surely Peter is being asked to rescue a situation which is beyond rescue or remedy?

And yet God is a God of the miraculous. Jesus' resurrection tells us that nothing, not even death, is beyond the scope of God's power.

However, those who were mourning Dorcas' death do not as yet seem to have shared this perspective. Their demonstrative response of grief is, of course, entirely natural and a testament to the depth of their love for Dorcas. And yet its expression does not allow for the possibility that God has planned an entirely different end to this story.

Peter needs to be able to minister and operate within an atmosphere of faith. So, harsh though this may seem, Peter needs to exclude these mourners from the scene in order to allow faith and God's power to flow. In this Peter may have been taking as his model the occasion when Jesus excluded the mourners from the house where He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (see Luke 8:48-56).

And when this miracle of Dorcas being raised from the dead does take place it does indeed result in many people who saw and heard what had happened coming to faith in Jesus. Many people, yes, but not everyone. For once again the miracle on its own is not sufficient to change the lives of those who see. It needs to be accompanied by faith.

As we read these accounts in John's gospel and the Acts of the Apostles they cause us to ask ourselves whether there are there or have been any occasions when our own lack of faith has prevented the power of God from flowing.

For if we begin by regarding circumstances, however difficult they may be, as being simply impossible then we write off the very possibility of God acting.

And so often faith and being able to trust people go hand in hand. Those who met the man who had been blind from birth and was now able to see wondered whether this was in fact the same person or simply someone who looked very like him. Perhaps when we think about this we are reminded of times when we have ignored the obvious explanation of some event in favour of an alternative but much more unlikely explanation. And why do we this? It happens when we do not trust someone.

And then again there are the times when we fail to recognise or to be thankful for the ways in which God is already acting. We may forget

answers to prayers which we have received and come to believe that these are simply a series of coincidences.

For even if what we have seen and heard of God's works is less dramatic than being raised from the dead the importance of recognising what God has done and maintaining an attitude of faith and thanksgiving remains just as important.

For the more that we are able to recognise where God is at work in our lives, the more our faith will be built up and in turn we will begin to witness God working with us in ever deeper and more powerful ways.

Tristram

Anna's new curacy

The details of Anna's new curacy have now been confirmed. She will serve the rest of her curacy in the Benefice of Budock at the church of St Budock in the Diocese of Truro. The benefice incorporates Budock Water as well as some of Falmouth. Anna will be licensed on 17th May.

New Bishop of Bath and Wells

It has been announced that our new Bishop of Bath and Wells will be the Rt Revd Michael Beasley. He is currently the Bishop of Hertford, a role which he has held since 2015. Prior to taking a fulltime role with the church, Bishop Michael was an epidemiologist, a background he was called on to use during the pandemic as a member of the Church of England's Covid task force.

Bishop Michael is already familiar with Somerset. His wife Lizzie is from a farming family from Somerset and prior to Bishop Michael being interviewed for the role of Bishop of Bath and Wells, they both undertook a 60 mile walk around the county.

Further details about Bishop Michael can be found on the Diocesan website, <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/news/new-bishop-of-bath-and-wells-announced.php/>

Points for Prayers

- Being able to see God at work and trusting what we see
- Peace and justice to prevail in the conflict between Russia and the Ukraine and for humanitarian efforts to help all those harmed by the conflict
- Continuing prevalence of covid cases
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For our new Bishop, Rt Revd Michael Beasley
- Anna's new curacy in Budock, Diocese of Truro
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton now reopened and for its first residents
- For North Cadbury church school and our other local schools as they continue their school terms
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Hymn

A suggested hymn for this Sunday is 'The God of love my shepherd is.' This is based on Psalm 23.

Services for this week and next

Sunday 8 th May	9.30 am Communion, Galhampton
Sunday 8 th May	9.30 am Communion, North Cheriton
Sunday 8 th May	9.30 am Matins, Blackford
Sunday 8 th May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Holton
Sunday 15 th May	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 15 th May	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 15 th May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 15 th May	6.30 pm Evensong, Yarlington

Excalibur

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes. The May edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk.

The Parish Office

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5: 2)