

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 159**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

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

## **Welcome**

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

## **Scripture Passages**

*Acts 16: 9-15*

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

<sup>10</sup> When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

<sup>11</sup> We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup> and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days.

<sup>13</sup> On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

### *John 14: 23-29*

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.

<sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

<sup>28</sup> “You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.”

## **Reflection**

What do we feel when we come to times of change in our life? Change and transitions may come in many different forms. It may be the birth of a child or grandchild, the death of someone close to us such as a parent or spouse or a wedding in the family. Or it may come through the loss of a job, the taking up of a new career or moving into retirement.

But in whatever form change comes to us it is likely to result in us feeling unsettled and perhaps insecure. Old, comforting certainties are replaced by a future in which we are surrounded by much that is unknown and which we are yet to experience.

And often times of change also require us to make decisions about our future direction in life. This again may be a source of anxiety. How can we possibly be sure that we are actually making the right decision?

We all face such times in our lives. Perhaps we are in one of those seasons right now. So how does our Christian faith help us to find the security and the direction that we look for?

As we look at our passage from John's gospel we are reading words which Jesus spoke to His disciples at the Last Supper. Jesus is preparing His disciples for what will happen to them after His crucifixion and resurrection. The disciples were facing their own spiritual point of transition.

And much of what Jesus has to say concerns the promise of the Holy Spirit. When as Christians we are facing what is dangerous and unknown we do not do so on our own. Rather we have the Holy Spirit walking alongside us and living in our hearts to bring us the assurance of Jesus's presence with us.

And so as we put our faith and trust in Christ a relationship is formed with God through the Holy Spirit. We find a home with God. So Jesus tells His disciples, 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.'

And so there is a security that comes through knowing God. A home is made for us with God. Whatever may be going on around us we need first of all to have the secure foundation of a relationship with God. And in this relationship we experience the peace that Jesus brings us, a peace which nothing and no-one else can give us.

But even so what direction are we to take when we are faced with significant decisions to make? Jesus also speaks of how the Holy Spirit will teach us, 'But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.'

And what specifically will the Holy Spirit teach us? Everything. That seems a good place to start. It is very broad and all encompassing. We can rely on

the Holy Spirit to tell us all that we need to know in our lives. But Jesus goes on to point us in a more specific direction when He says that the Holy Spirit will remind us of all that He has said.

In other words, the Holy Spirit does not operate alone to show us completely new truths. Rather the Holy Spirit illuminates and brings to life what is already known, words that Jesus has already spoken and which have been recorded in scripture. We may have some experience of this work of the Holy Spirit when we ourselves read scripture. Some particular word or phrase from a particular passage just seems to stand out for us as we read it and calls for our focussed attention and thought. And this may not be the same word or phrase which struck us when we last read this passage. Nevertheless, this is the way that the Holy Spirit wishes to guide us and to direct our attention.

And so through our relationship with Jesus and through the Holy Spirit's teaching and reminding us of what Jesus has said we receive much of what we need to know in order to steer a clear path through life. Sometimes people ask the question 'What would Jesus do?' and it is a good question to ask. However, very often as we ponder the meaning of scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit the answer to this question becomes clear and obvious.

Nevertheless, there are occasions when we need more than this. Even when we have pondered deeply Jesus' words as recorded for us in scripture and asked ourselves what they may mean for us today we may still find it difficult and puzzling to know what God's way forward is for us. Or there may be two equally good alternatives which we might choose and we do not know which of them we should take, which of them represents God's preferred choice. And then sometimes there is an obvious course of action but, for some reason which we find it difficult to pin down, we have our doubts as to whether we should actually take this course as opposed to venturing out in a more unusual and challenging direction.

On those occasions we need some very specific prompting from the Holy Spirit.

This is the position in which the apostle Paul found himself in our passage from Acts. He too is at a point of significant transition in his ministry.

And at this time Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia who pleads with him to come over and help him. However, immediately before this vision, Paul and his companions have found the progress of their missionary journey blocked on two separate occasions.

They had intended to continue their missionary adventure in the Roman province of Asia (modern day Turkey) but this had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit. And then they had intended to go into Bithynia (also in modern day Turkey) but once again the Holy Spirit did not allow them to do this.

We do not know the exact means by which the Holy Spirit spoke to them. Was it by some strong and direct prophetic message? Or more gently perhaps by some inner uneasy impression which came to them as they thought about setting off in these directions? Or was it through circumstances by, as we would put it, doors closing for them and making their intended route simply impossible?

We are not told. However, the result is the same. Their missionary journey has come to a standstill. The possible and obvious routes forward have been blocked. What are they to do and what might God be saying to them through these doors which have been closed to them? At this point they are in serious need of some direct sign from the Holy Spirit.

And this is what Paul is given through this vision of the man from Macedonia. For this was a significant moment not simply in Paul's ministry but in the entire ministry of the early church. For when Paul and his companions crossed over into Macedonia they came for the very first time

into Europe. And so the door was opened for the gospel to be preached in Europe. How significant that has proved to be for the entire future of the church.

When we consider this moment in Paul's ministry we may easily be reminded of times in our lives when we have faced points of transition.

How have we known which way forward to take?

Paul receives a very direct sign as to which way to go. On some occasions we may ourselves have received this kind of sign. Perhaps we have come to a point where the obvious ways forward have been blocked and it becomes clear that some other, unknown path has to be opened up for us. These are often the occasions on which God speaks to us in this way.

On the other hand, we may not receive any clear or apparent sign. But that does not mean that we will lack God's guidance. Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who put their trust in Him. First of all, the Holy Spirit gives us a continuing relationship with God with comfort and security of the Jesus' presence with us which that brings. And out of that comes an immense and immeasurable reservoir of wisdom as the Holy Spirit reminds us of all that Jesus has said to us. And we should not forget our natural powers of reason and analysis as we seek to work through complex problems. These powers too have been given to us by God and as they are offered back to God they too can be used to help in guiding us.

But in whichever way we may have found God speaking and guiding us the most important point to remember is that the Holy Spirit comes to give us a home with God. And from the security of such a home we will be given all that we need to help us through those times of transition and uncertainty that we all face in life.

*Tristram*

## Points for Prayers

- Finding our security and direction in life through the Holy Spirit
- 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
- Preparations for the Platinum Jubilee and special services to be held
- All those affected by the cost of living crisis
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For our new Bishop, Rt Revd Michael Beasley
- 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 hymn which speaks of our home with God is 'Jerusalem the golden'.

## Services for this week and next

Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury

Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	6.30 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	9.30 am Family Service, North Cheriton
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00 am Morning Service, Maperton
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Bratton Seymour
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> May	6.30 pm Evensong, Galhampton

## **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](http://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](mailto: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)