



the bridge lectionary reflections 2021

APRIL

Reflections from Ann Corner



April 4th John 20 v 1 – 18 Praise God for Resurrection Joy.

At a time when many even within the church, question the resurrection, we do well to remember that Jesus said “I am the Resurrection and the Life”. But the resurrection is more than something to be believed. It is something to be experienced and felt deep within our hearts and lived out day by day. I don’t think anything shines more brightly in the accounts of the resurrection than the story of Mary. When the other women left the tomb, Mary lingered in the garden. How dearly she loved Jesus and her loving devotion was rewarded, for Mary was the first to see the risen Lord.

Mary went to the garden that first Easter morning full of sadness and deep sorrow but having seen the risen Christ and heard him call her by name she left the garden filled with great joy as she hurried to share the wonderful news with the disciples.

On this glorious Easter Day, whatever sadness fills our hearts, may we like Mary hear him call us by name and be able to say ‘I know that my Redeemer lives’ and experience the wonderful joy such assurance gives.

April 11th John 20 v 19 – 31 No more doubts.

Most of us have a soft spot for Thomas, for like him we sometimes have doubts. We don’t know why Thomas wasn’t with the other disciples, but when later he was told that Jesus had risen and visited them, he refused to believe. Thomas made a big mistake separating himself from his fellow disciples. Just think what he missed! But Jesus knew why he wasn’t there and Thomas was given a second chance.

As we read today’s passage we can see that though Thomas made one mistake, he had two great virtues. First of all he was honest; he refused to say he believed when he didn’t. But when Thomas saw the risen Lord for himself he fell on his knees crying “My Lord and my God”. Here we see Thomas’s other great virtue, he was whole hearted – no half measures for Thomas, for he saw what the others had failed to see. Jesus is God!

So if we have any doubts about the truth of the Easter story let us confess them, thus allowing the Lord Jesus to come to us as he did to Thomas, then we too will be able to say with our fellow believers “No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life”.

April 18th Luke 24 v 36 – 48 Witnesses.

Luke's story of the two on the Emmaus Road which precedes today's reading, is one of the most thrilling resurrection stories. Sad and downcast the two failed to recognise the stranger who had joined them until he broke bread, then they realised it was Jesus. All sadness gone they hurried back to Jerusalem where they joined those already gathered in the Upper Room with their joyous message "Jesus is risen". As they were telling their story, suddenly Jesus stood in their midst, greeting them with the familiar words "Peace be with you"; but once again they failed to recognise him, partly through fear, thinking he was a ghost and partly because they could hardly believe Jesus had come to them! When they realised it really was him, they listened as he reminded them that everything that had happened had already been foretold.

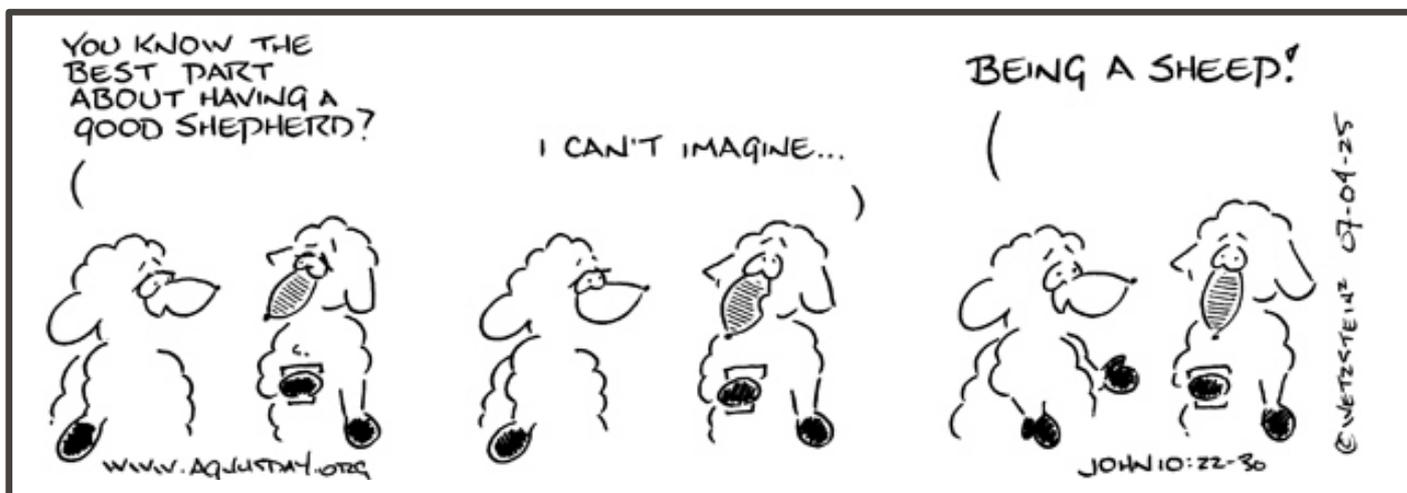
How often their reaction is our reaction! We hear others telling of their thrilling experiences of Jesus, but find it hard to believe that such experiences could be ours. But they can! As we read God's word, Jesus comes to us in the form of the Holy Spirit, helping us to understand what we read, blessing us with his love and his peace and meeting our needs in amazing ways. He reminds us as he reminded those gathered there that night – "You are witnesses of these things" and as his witnesses we must share the good news with others.

April 25th John 10 v 11 – 18 "I am the Good Shepherd"

These familiar words of Jesus found in today's reading, have always had special meaning for me; for having lived in a rural area all my life, sometimes staying with relatives on farms, it was fairly easy even from a young age, for me to grasp something of the truths Jesus was teaching his disciples. It meant so much to know Jesus loved and cared for me in such a special way, even dying for me on the cross. Just as a 'good' shepherd knows his sheep, so Jesus knows us, calling each one of us by name. In these verses Jesus is telling his disciples that so great is his love he is willing to lay down his life for them. John 3 v 16 tells us God loves the whole world and in today's reading when he speaks of the 'other' sheep he is referring to Gentiles (ie. non-Jews) the world over. But not only does Jesus know his sheep individually he tells us we can know him in this special way too.

Few passages speak so clearly of God's love for us than these words in John's gospel and David's words in Psalm 23 and few pictures can have brought greater comfort and inspiration than that of Jesus, our Good Shepherd caring, providing and dying for the sheep he loves so much.

'Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care'.





the bridge lectionary reflections 2021

APRIL

Reflections from Ann Corner



April 4th John 20 v 1 – 18 Praise God for Resurrection Joy.

At a time when many even within the church, question the resurrection, we do well to remember that Jesus said “I am the Resurrection and the Life”. But the resurrection is more than something to be believed. It is something to be experienced and felt deep within our hearts and lived out day by day. I don’t think anything shines more brightly in the accounts of the resurrection than the story of Mary. When the other women left the tomb, Mary lingered in the garden. How dearly she loved Jesus and her loving devotion was rewarded, for Mary was the first to see the risen Lord.

Mary went to the garden that first Easter morning full of sadness and deep sorrow but having seen the risen Christ and heard him call her by name she left the garden filled with great joy as she hurried to share the wonderful news with the disciples.

On this glorious Easter Day, whatever sadness fills our hearts, may we like Mary hear him call us by name and be able to say ‘I know that my Redeemer lives’ and experience the wonderful joy such assurance gives.

April 11th John 20 v 19 – 31 No more doubts.

Most of us have a soft spot for Thomas, for like him we sometimes have doubts. We don’t know why Thomas wasn’t with the other disciples, but when later he was told that Jesus had risen and visited them, he refused to believe. Thomas made a big mistake separating himself from his fellow disciples. Just think what he missed! But Jesus knew why he wasn’t there and Thomas was given a second chance.

As we read today’s passage we can see that though Thomas made one mistake, he had two great virtues. First of all he was honest; he refused to say he believed when he didn’t. But when Thomas saw the risen Lord for himself he fell on his knees crying “My Lord and my God”. Here we see Thomas’s other great virtue, he was whole hearted – no half measures for Thomas, for he saw what the others had failed to see. Jesus is God!

So if we have any doubts about the truth of the Easter story let us confess them, thus allowing the Lord Jesus to come to us as he did to Thomas , then we too will be able to say with our fellow believers “No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life”.

April 18th Luke 24 v 36 – 48 Witnesses.

Luke's story of the two on the Emmaus Road which precedes today's reading, is one of the most thrilling resurrection stories. Sad and downcast the two failed to recognise the stranger who had joined them until he broke bread, then they realised it was Jesus. All sadness gone they hurried back to Jerusalem where they joined those already gathered in the Upper Room with their joyous message "Jesus is risen". As they were telling their story, suddenly Jesus stood in their midst, greeting them with the familiar words "Peace be with you"; but once again they failed to recognise him, partly through fear, thinking he was a ghost and partly because they could hardly believe Jesus had come to them! When they realised it really was him, they listened as he reminded them that everything that had happened had already been foretold.

How often their reaction is our reaction! We hear others telling of their thrilling experiences of Jesus, but find it hard to believe that such experiences could be ours. But they can! As we read God's word, Jesus comes to us in the form of the Holy Spirit, helping us to understand what we read, blessing us with his love and his peace and meeting our needs in amazing ways. He reminds us as he reminded those gathered there that night – "You are witnesses of these things" and as his witnesses we must share the good news with others.

April 25th John 10 v 11 – 18 "I am the Good Shepherd"

These familiar words of Jesus found in today's reading, have always had special meaning for me; for having lived in a rural area all my life, sometimes staying with relatives on farms, it was fairly easy even from a young age, for me to grasp something of the truths Jesus was teaching his disciples. It meant so much to know Jesus loved and cared for me in such a special way, even dying for me on the cross. Just as a 'good' shepherd knows his sheep, so Jesus knows us, calling each one of us by name. In these verses Jesus is telling his disciples that so great is his love he is willing to lay down his life for them. John 3 v 16 tells us God loves the whole world and in today's reading when he speaks of the 'other' sheep he is referring to Gentiles (ie. non-Jews) the world over. But not only does Jesus know his sheep individually he tells us we can know him in this special way too.

Few passages speak so clearly of God's love for us than these words in John's gospel and David's words in Psalm 23 and few pictures can have brought greater comfort and inspiration than that of Jesus, our Good Shepherd caring, providing and dying for the sheep he loves so much.

'Saviour, like a shepherd lead us, much we need thy tender care'.

