

Coach House Church BEACONS

FOGGY DAYS

20TH AUGUST 2020

There's always one thing we like to talk about – the weather. It must be so boring to live in a country where every day is predictable: yet another sunny day with clear blue skies! Well, I woke up one morning recently to hear the fog horn in the distance. The sea mist covered the whole of the bay, no horizon in sight, and not very much in sight either. The air was still which is in itself very unusual for our campsite and I could hear the low rumble of the ferry engines as they left the harbour for Dublin.

I couldn't see the sea, but I knew it was there. I couldn't see the ferry, as huge as it was, but I could hear evidence of it. Not being able to see something is not evidence that it doesn't exist. Some would say I can't believe in God because I can't see him. Some would say that the situation is so bad how can God exist in this.

The bible tells us that Jesus is evidence of God. John 1:18 says No-one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

By reading God's word, the bible, we can learn from Jesus' teaching and through faith we can put our trust in him. It does not necessarily mean we will fully and instantly grasp all the complexities of life.

In 1 Corinthians 13:12 it says Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything but then we will, just as God completely understands us. (CEV)

It's like we are living in a fog. There are things we know and learn as we experience them but we don't see everything clearly. Our minds have limited

capacity to understand every intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual aspect of life. Even the greatest scientists and philosophers of history, the greatest thinkers, had to propose theories and suggest their own thoughts. Sometimes we have to accept that life is a mystery to us and that only when we reach heaven will we be able to finally have our questions completely answered.

In Luke 18 Jesus is talking to the disciples to explain about the awful events that are about to happen- his arrest and crucifixion. In verse 32, Jesus even tells them that he will rise again.

31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the gentiles. 32 They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; they will flog him and kill him. On the third day He will rise again.'

The disciples have worked and travelled, living closely with Jesus. The information Jesus was telling them was the same information that had been told the Jewish people through the prophets, so they would have learned about it in the synagogue.

Yet, in verse 34 it says:

The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

They were in a fog and could not comprehend what was being said to them. It wasn't until after Jesus resurrection that they really began to make sense what he had told them. Further, when they experienced the power of God's Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the evidence of the last few years dropped into place. They knew deep inside their spiritual self that Jesus teachings were true and that he was the Messiah, the Saviour, the Son of God. The mist had lifted and through faith in God they could move forward confidently in life, no longer worrying about what they did not know, but able to rely on God's Holy Spirit to guide and support them. Through faith we recognise and put our trust and our future hope in Almighty God, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. If we ask, through prayer, we can experience their presence. One way is through reading the bible. For example, once when I was in a quandary about applying for a particular job, it was as though the words on the page jumped out at me. I read Psalm 139 verse 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

This verse refers to protecting and guiding, steering the way down the unknown route. I was in a quandary because the job looked like a good opportunity for promotion, but I was uneasy about it. When I read this verse I knew that God was in control and not me. If I felt uneasy it was because it wasn't the right job for me. And it turned out to be just right as the perfect job appeared later on.

In another instance, I was about to have an emergency operation and was understandably anxious. I asked God to send someone to me, someone who I wouldn't expect, and for them to give me a verse from the bible, as something I could hold onto, something that I knew was directly from God. And guess what, this is exactly what happened. I was given Psalm 46:10 Be still and know that I am God. Whenever I felt the anxiety rise up I remembered the verse and felt a deep peace throughout.

And when the fog lifts it is such a great moment. It often lifts slowly, almost unperceptively until you realise there is more beyond the immediate situation. When the fog lifted around midday on the campsite, I could see the sea again clearly, with the sun reflecting off its surface, the green of the surrounding countryside and the harbour in the distance. What came to mind were the words of the old hymn: Here is love vast as the ocean.

The ocean is never-ending as it all links up around the earth. If you remember from school drawing the water cycle – with the sun on the sea, clouds forming, falling as rain as it reached the mountains, then flowing down streams and rivers towards the sea, to start all over again, then you realise that life giving water is part of an endless cycle. The hymn was written by William Rees who was born in 1802. It became an anthem of the Welsh Revival in 1904 as a renewal of Christianity swept through Wales. The words are timeless and remind us of God's love for us, that never ends and endures through every situation. We may not always see the way ahead clearly but we can have peace as we ask God to direct and guide us. Reflect on the words of the hymn, written two hundred years ago but still full of God's love and hope for us.

Here is love, vast as the ocean, loving kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our ransom, shed for us his precious blood.
Who his love will not remember? Who can cease to sing his praise?
He can never be forgotten, throughout heaven's eternal days.
On the mount of crucifixion, fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy flowed a vast and gracious tide.

Grace and love like mighty rivers, poured incessant from above,
And heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty word in love.



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