

Bible Study notes Easter 3

If you are planning to talk about the readings later with others, (eg through Zoom) please **note anything that strikes you** as you go along, so you may need a pen and paper – you will also need a Bible.

The approach below is one which I hope everyone can follow. It does require a bit of confidence as you allow the Bible to do most of the work! My experience is that if we allow the Bible, the word, to speak to us, we will find God can touch us in new (and also familiar) ways.

Often in Bible studies I find the study does itself. Oh, it is helpful to know a bit of Greek sometimes or to follow a plan at times, but ultimately, we wish to encounter the living God in the living words of the Bible. And for me that is the hope of these study sessions.

Today we are reading some of the lectionary readings set for Sunday (26th April).

What to do...

First, I suggest you begin the Bible study with a short prayer – maybe asking for God's light to shine on your reflections and also say the Lord's Prayer.

Next Read **Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19** (or the whole psalm)

[I'm never quite sure about lectionary readings which split passages, like this one does. In many ways I think it is better just to read the whole psalm.]

Now PAUSE before reading the questions.

As you pause, note if anything touched you in the reading – any insights you gained. If anything has struck you, you may want to return to it and reflect more on that part of the reading.

You might want to write something down before reading on.

Questions:

- Did anything especially strike you in this passage?
- What did you understand best?
- How did that challenge you?

Here's how I answered those questions:

There are one or two parts which struck me in this reading. Especially the words (not included in the lectionary) about walking in the land of the living. I love that sentiment. It challenges me to also dwell in the land of the living even when the daily news seems to focus on death and destruction.

Next Read **1 Peter 1:17-23**

Follow the same pattern as before, i.e.

PAUSE before reading the questions. As you pause, note if anything touched you in the reading, or any insights you gained etc.

Questions: (As above)

- Did anything especially strike you in this passage?
- What did you understand best?
- How did that challenge you?

In my reflections I was struck that it is not an easy passage for me to understand. For example I wasn't quite sure how verse 17 fitted in with the following bit about Christ's blood - which leads to us having been born anew (verse 23). That bit I think I did understand – Christ's blood has set us free (ransomed) so we can be born anew through the everlasting word the good news of Christ (v 25). The bit I found easiest to understand in this reading was, "love one another from the heart", and that's the bit I take away as a challenge.

Next Read **Luke 24:13-35**

Follow the same pattern as before, i.e.

PAUSE before reading the questions.

As you pause, note if anything touched you in the reading, or any insights you gained.

Questions: As above

- Did anything especially strike you in this passage?
- What did you understand best?
- How did that challenge you?

In this reading I was struck by the disciples' hearts being on fire, and them not even knowing it until they saw who was with them. Also this thing about them seeing it was Jesus... It's not enough that they see with their eyes, in fact their eyes let them down, because it is about their hearts.. When they are attentive to the fire within, they see far more than they realised. And once their hearts are awakened to the fire within, they are so energised! It's like they are released to be themselves – free to be joyful once more. I am challenged in this reading by the change I see in these disciples as they respond to what they have discovered in their hearts after Jesus' presence has been revealed to them. I wonder how I respond to the risen Christ and to what extent I have ignored or not noticed the fire I have felt in my heart?

Final question: Are there any ways these readings link up – especially the bits I have understood, or the bits that have struck me?

Pause

Take time with the reflections you have made.

If you want to know how I responded, read on...

For me, the big thing, which started in the psalm and became really powerful for the disciples walking to Emmaus, was, walking in the land of the living. That is what I think God is saying to me in these readings. Don't walk with your eyes on the world of death but seek the imperishable "through the living and enduring word of God." (1 Peter 1:23) Walk in the land of the living! Walk because Christ is with you. Walk in the land of the living because your heart is on fire!

Final Prayer:

Risen Christ, help me to see you this Eastertime with the eyes of faith. Give me your assurance that I am walking with you in the land of the living. Bless protect and guide me, and all who are entrusted to my care this week. Amen.