

## ***What's the Difference?***

Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48

*We will be like him.*  
[1 John 3:2]

How do you sleep at night? The first question in the morning is often, how did you sleep? I have to respond - I don't know! I was asleep!

The Psalmist, who is generally miserable about life, manages to make the positive point that because he has faith he does manage to sleep.

Faith needs to make a difference to us or it is little use.

*Does anyone want to share with us the difference faith makes to them?*

The thing that sings out from the readings for today is that any faith worthy of the name Christian makes us more like Jesus!

The **Gospel** continues the story of the resurrection.

If you are going to become more like Jesus you need to be sure that he is who he claims to be!

- ✦ That first Sunday was very busy for the Disciples. Last week we met some of them behind locked doors because they were afraid.
- ✦ The passage just before the one we read had two of them walking to Emmaus, joined by a stranger, whom they eventually recognise to be Jesus when he breaks the bread.
- ✦ Jesus arrives back where they were and invites those gathered to test that he was really there - then he eats!
- ✦ Jesus then reminds the disciples that faith never stands still - they can't stay in the upper room: they have to go and tell people that forgiveness is possible. That was why Jesus died!

Go home from today and reflect on the differences faith has made to you. It isn't just that your diary fills up with 'Churchy' things to do, but it changes what you think is important and it also changes how you relate to other people.

When you read the passage from **Acts** you get Peter's emphasis on contrasts:

- ✦ He, together with John, had just been instrumental in the healing of a lame man at the entrance to the Temple. Like any good Christian, Peter seizes the opportunity to talk about Jesus (he had to correct the impression that they had healed and to redirect their attention to Jesus).
- ✦ Peter preaches a powerful sermon, making sure that his Jewish congregation get the point that Jesus is the Messiah and that everything that happens is part of God's plan, and then makes two contrasts:
  - i) Barabas the **murderer** was released and Jesus **the author of life** was killed
  - ii) You **killed** but God **raised**  
What human beings may regard as a 'good idea' or the 'right thing' is often at variance with what God thinks!
- ✦ Faith begins with repentance (*metanoia*) and the result is almost, literally, *wiping the slate clean* with God.

Faith makes a difference because we change our minds about what we think is right! We embrace what God thinks!

In the **Epistle** John is also quite clear and straightforward:

- ✦ The DNA of faith leads us to accepting that we are loved and because we are loved we are capable of love.
- ✦ The DNA of faith leads us to accept that we are forgiven and because we are forgiven we try to be done with sin.
- ✦ The DNA of faith leads us to become more like Jesus! We will be like him!

John Wesley said that if a man truly converts to Christianity then his cat and dog will know the difference.

One of the interesting things about being a grandparent is seeing your children deal with their own children - and hearing exactly the same things you used to say to them. If nothing else, it is evidence of the family relationship.

What is the evidence that we are God's children? Is it there in such a way that people around us recognise it?