



Over the Summer holidays, starting from Sunday July 31st, St Paul's Sermons have been on the theme, 'Questions from God': What is it that God is asking of us? Below is a summary of all the sermons to date and their Bible passages.

Questions from God: 'Where are you?' Genesis Chapter 3: 1-19. Key verse: 9 July 31st

The story of Adam and Eve, the serpent and the apple: the 'Fall of Man' and the beginning of a broken society prompts us to ask ourselves, 'where are we':

- In our relationship of fellowship with God and intimacy with the Holy Spirit?
- In our relationship with our fellow men and women? *[In our relationship with God's Creation?]*
- However far away we are, **there is always a way back through the Cross of Jesus. Colossians 1: 20-23**

Questions from God: 'What have you done?' Genesis 3: 1-13. Key verse: 13. Matthew 25: 14-30 August 7th

We compared Adam and Eve's story with Jesus' parable of the talents and God asks us, 'What have we done':

- With the life I have given you through the death of my Son?
- With the world I created; its people; its poor; its refugees; its homeless?
- What have you done with My Church? **Again: It's never too late to start to get things into God's perspective.**

Questions from God: 'What's in your hand?' Exodus Chapters 3&4. Key verse: Exodus 4:2 August 14th

All Moses had in his hand was a rough all-purpose shepherd's staff or crook. Probably worn with time and hard use.

- What we have 'in our hands' are the natural talents God gives us and we have an obligation to use them.
- Whatever we're given is never enough on its own for the challenges life brings us all. But in Jesus' hands our gifts are multiplied exponentially. **We need to trust His ability in us and obey Him.** Ephesians 3: 20-21.

Questions from God: 'What are you doing here?' 1 Kings 19: 1-21. Key verse: 1 Kings 19: 9,13. August 21st

Elijah came from spiritual elation on Mount Carmel, through exhaustion into fear for his life, dejection and depression.

- First, God restores Elijah with food and rest. **We must allow ourselves breaks & look after our bodies.**
- Emotional and spiritual restoration comes as God meets with Elijah up the mountain in a gentle whisper. Elijah is honest – He feels his zeal for his God has got him no-where. **We have to be prepared to listen to God.**
- Elijah was given new tasks and a new partner, Elisha. Elijah served the Lord for a total of 80 years! **Instead of looking back, look forward to the next challenge, knowing our best reward will be our Master's approval.**

Questions from God: 'Who are you?' Job Chapters 38 & 39. Key verse: Job 38: 2; 40: 1-2 August 28th

These two chapters from the book of Job are a comparison of the Greatness of God with us – His creation (small 'c').

By the time we finish reading them, we are in no doubt that we need to get a better perspective on 'Who we are?'

- Reassurance.** In Job 38: 1-37 God has made the Whole Universe. **God is in control of everything, including us!**
- Humility.** Job 38. Anything man has done is nothing to what God has done and is doing. **We are not in charge.**
- Practising getting a better perspective.** Psalm 139 reminds us that we can have confidence in this God because He knew us before we were born, He knows everything about us yet loves us everlastingly and is always with us.

Questions from God: 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' Isaiah 6: 1-8. Key verse: 6:6 September 4th

Isaiah was called to be a prophet in Judah at a time of war with Israel and Syria, political intrigue, fear, corruption and religious intolerance. Isaiah goes to the temple to worship and has an encounter with God:

Verse 1. The (good) King had died, Judah felt rudderless, but God is still on the throne. Some 'Remainers' feel bereft about Brexit, Americans despair between Trump and Clinton. **But God is still Sovereign, our message is one of Hope.**

Verse 2. Isaiah saw the Lord. So often we wish we could 'see' what Isaiah saw – but we can, in the pages of the Word of God, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. **God's revelation is freely available – we are so privileged to have the Bible.**

Verse 3. The Six wings of the Seraphim: 2 covered their heads – God is too Holy to be seen; 2 covered their feet – God to be respected, feet are dirty; 2 were for flying. Worship: Service should be in the same 2:1 ratio. (Mary & Martha) The Seraphim called out to the Trinity: Holy, Holy, Holy: **God is distinct from everything else, set apart & different.**

Verse 5. God's holiness splits Isaiah apart: he is 'undone' and recognises he's part of a community that is undone.

Verse 6. The burning coal is symbolic of the Cross. OT continual fiery sacrifices have been replaced by Jesus' sacrifice.

Verse 7. Isaiah's guilt is taken away, his sin removed. **Christ's death makes us 'at-one' with God: set-apart Saints.**

Verse 8. God: 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' Isaiah: 'Behold! Send me!' Unlike Moses, Isaiah knew at once that God had enabled him for this calling and willingly went on to preach to a people he knew would never listen.

We are still called to 'Go for God' 'May we have the grace and courage to crawl across a field of broken glass to reach one lost sinner'. [Brother Andrew] Also the poem 'If I were God I wouldn't let the children die by Adrian Plass