

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 17th April 2016

## **THE EASTER SEASON – THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

### **As we Gather**

Throughout his Gospel, John emphasises the importance of personal relationships – particularly our relationship with God / Jesus.

This week's readings indicate that people approach Jesus for many reasons.

**Reading Scripture**      **John 10:22-30**    see also    **Acts 9:36-43**    **Psalm 23**    **Revelation 7:9-17**

### **Thinking Together**

Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah – the Festival of Lights – celebrated in December in remembrance of the rededication of the Temple following its desecration by the Romans in about 164 BC. He was walking in a side court of the Temple which was given over to prayer and Rabbinic teaching groups, when He was approached by the religious leaders asking for proof that He was the Messiah (John 10:22-24).

#### **Why was it so important for them to know this? Discuss**

Jesus reminded them that His words and His works had already revealed who He was (Isaiah 35:5-6 Deuteronomy 18:15)

#### **Why could they not understand His words or grasp the significance of His deeds? Discuss See John 10:26**

To those who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord, He promises

- Eternal life with God (John 10:28 Revelation 7:9-17)
- The gift of life, not death (John 10:28-29 Acts 36-43)
- A safe life, as even in a world of disaster they will know the security and serenity of God (John 10:28-29 Psalm 23)

#### **How do these promises make you feel? Discuss**

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus has a three-fold relationship with His sheep / disciples

- A loving relationship. He died for you and His work on the cross removes the guilt of sin as He wins for each of us forgiveness for past sins and freedom from the slavery to sin (Ephesians 1:3 + 7-8 John 10:27)

#### **How do you deal with feelings of guilt? Discuss**

- A living relationship. His love and grace nurture, protect and lead us into a new and intimate relationship with God, in which fear is gone, and love is the uniting bond (Matthew 5:8 Ephesians 1:4-6)

#### **How does this knowledge make you feel? Discuss**

- A lasting relationship. He keeps His sheep and does not lose them. The work of Christ in His life and in His death is to restore the lost relationship between God and human beings and give us entry into the presence of God, to live and serve Him in His glory.

In order to become a member of God's kingdom / family we have to appropriate / accept Christ's sacrifice through penitence, faith and using the means of grace (Scripture, prayer and sacraments)

**What role do the means of grace play in your life? Discuss**

### **In Closing**

Jesus stated His deity clearly when He said 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30). God the Father and God the Son are one in essence and nature, not in identity.

Jesus was one with God because He loved God perfectly, obeyed God perfectly and came into this world to make us what He is.

It is the trust of Jesus in the power of the Father that kept / keeps Jesus and His sheep / disciples safe. It is the love of the Father that unites us all.

**Do your personal relationships reflect the love you have received?**

### **PRAYER**

O God, your Son Jesus is the good shepherd.

Grant that all who hear his voice may know Him who calls us each by name, and follow where He leads.

Amen