

## **QUESTIONS THE LORD ASKS - 'WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?'**

Ps 37:3-6

Jn 1:35-42

Three friends are in visiting in a big city. They are staying on the 90<sup>th</sup> floor of a high rise hotel. They return after a night out and discover that there has been a power failure. They can't use the lift/elevator, so have no choice but to walk up the 90 flights of stairs. They decide that to help pass the time they will tell each other stories. The first one will tell funny stories for the first 30 flights; the second will tell scary stories for the next 30 flights and the last one will tell sad stories for the final 30 flights.

So they set off and the funny stories help to keep their spirits up. Then come the scary stories and that gets their adrenaline pumping and helps to keep them moving. Finally comes the turn of the third person and his sad stories. But he says he doesn't have any sad stories to tell. 'Think hard – there must be something you can tell us. Nothing. 'This isn't fair; we did our bit, now it's your turn', they say. For a while still nothing. Then, just as they are approaching the 90<sup>th</sup> floor he says, 'I've just thought of a very sad story – we left our keys at the reception desk.'

A sad story indeed. But how much sadder, if we get to the end of our lives and discover we've forgotten the key to life.

What is the key to life? What are most people looking for? Well, who better to ask than Google? Google's answer? Happiness. That seems to be the number one thing people are looking for.

The problem with happiness is that it depends to a large extent on external factors – the weather, health, job security, the absence of war, the success of one's sports team! In a word happiness depends a lot on what happens to us. We need something that comes from within us and is not dependent on external factors - on the circumstances around us.

When Jesus asks the two disciples that question, 'What are you looking for?', they reply, 'Teacher, where are you staying'. But that's not really what they wanted to know, is it? Here is a man whom John calls 'Lamb of God'. They want to know more about this special person. And Jesus says, 'Come and see'. Jesus is saying in effect, 'Come with me and see a life of fulfilment and meaning.' When Jesus meets Simon, He says to him, 'You are Simon, but you will be called Peter, meaning 'a rock'. Jesus sees beyond Simon's rough exterior the person that he can become by following Jesus.

It's like a story told about the great painter and sculptor, Michelangelo. He was busy working on a large block of marble when someone passed by and asked what he was doing. He replied, 'I am releasing the angel trapped inside this block of marble'. Like a skilled craftsman, Jesus sees the potential that lies inside us, and enables us to realise that potential. Is that not what we are all looking for? To become all that we can be.

You may be familiar with the psychologist, Abraham Maslow, and what he called the hierarchy of needs – the needs of humans, starting from the most basic needs of food and shelter, moving up to needs of safety and security, then needs for love and belonging. At the top of the hierarchy he has what he calls 'self-actualisation' – in other words, becoming all that we are capable of becoming; all that we were created to be. And how better to discover that than to consult the One who created us. It makes sense, doesn't it? God is the one who made us and knows us and what His plan is for us.

We read in Ps 37:4, 'Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.' The GNB puts it this way, 'Seek your happiness in the Lord and He will give you your heart's desire'.

That verse says that we find fulfilment of our deepest desires when we look to the Lord; when we delight ourselves in God and the things of God. In other words, to discover our purpose in life, our first priority should be to live in close contact with the Lord. When we do that, He is able to direct us to our purpose.

Another verse that comes to mind is Matt 6:33, 'Seek first the Kingdom of God, or as the GNB puts it, 'Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and what He requires of you, and all these other things will be given to you as well.' The 'other things' that Jesus has been talking about are the material things of life – food, clothing. Instead of seeking fulfilment in those physical and material things, says Jesus, begin with God. 'Seek first the Kingdom of God'. 'Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and what He requires of you...'

The Kingdom of God is the reign of God; the rule of God – in the world as well as in your life and mine. To the extent that we recognise God's Kingship and rule in our lives, to that extent we will be the people He made us to be; to that extent we will be fulfilling the purpose for which God put us here.

Jesus said to the disciples, 'Follow Me and I will MAKE you fishers of men and women.' As we follow Him, as we walk with Him step by step, day by day, He will MAKE us... to be the people HE created us to be.

I receive a daily extract from the writings of Fred Beuchner. This is what came yesterday:  
ISRAEL DID NOT want to be a holy nation. Israel wanted to be a nation like all the other nations, a nation like Egypt, like Syria. She wanted clout. She wanted security. She wanted a place in the sun. It was her own way she wanted, not God's way; and when the prophets spoke about it, she got rid of the prophets. And when God's demands seemed too onerous, she took up with all the other gods who still get our votes and our money, because they are gods who could not care less whether we are holy or not, and promise absolutely everything we want and absolutely nothing we really need.

What do you want? What are you looking for?

Let's not get up there one day and discover that we forgot the key.