

2020-09-27 ... 6.30pm Evening Prayer Sermon ... Revd Sam Johnson
Ezekiel 37:24-end; 1 John 2: 22 - end

This week has been a funny kind of week ... Earlier this week I felt really busy, and really my ordination still seemed a long way off. And then on Friday I went on Ordination Retreat.

The retreat this year was a quiet day in a place called Hoars Cross, near Burton-on-Trent

It was a great retreat, led by Bishop Jan, who many of you, I know, heard speak at the Ordination service on Saturday.

At the quiet day I wasn't really sure what to make of it all. I'd just driven for an hour and a half and now there were huge chunks of time for us to reflect on our own ...

I ended up going on a few little wanders around, first around the grounds of the hall, which was great, a lovely place, woodland, nice clear paths, an easy little wander.

The second walk I went on was out the other way, sign-posted "public footpath"... and it was labelled as the "Kissing Gate" walk! All I know is that I went over a stile into a field ... and then there were no more signs, no clear path, no way to go.

I wandered across the field, and then out onto a road ... Then along the road, and along another road with a growing disconcertment that I didn't actually know the way back!

As I rounded a bend I got a glimpse of the church we were supposed to be at in the distance and so headed towards it, but it was into another field, over a gate, then there was no way out of the field so I ended up hopping over a fence through some brambles ... and even then I had to keep looking for the church tower in order to find it. I ended up back in a field, still unsure as to where I was, and eventually came up against a fence – a barbed wire fence.

Just the other side of the fence was the church again ... so I was at least back in the right place – but I ended up having to clamber over this barbed wire fence Not the easiest thing to do, even with my long legs, and ripped a hole in the side of my trousers!

I felt like such an idiot! I did make my way back and all is fine – I've even repaired the trousers!

But as I read this evening's readings it reminded me a little of this. When we walk through life – sometimes, especially to start with, things seem easy going – things seem straightforward and simple – the path is easy. Then, perhaps we strike out in a more challenging direction, things happen in life that aren't so nice, there are obstacles and it's easy to get lost.

And sometimes it is that we have to look back, and remember who it is we are following – who it is we are serving. And this is what this passage is calling us to do – to remember what you have heard from the beginning, who and what have called us to the promise of eternal life.

The one, Jesus, who forgave our sins and died on a cross, the one who leads us, even when the path gets tricky – like the church tower led me back.

He will lead us back. It's not an easy walk, sometimes it can even be painful overcoming the obstacles but the promise that he will be with us is one we can cling to, one that is real and one that is not counterfeit. **PTO**

So this evening – if you've started your journey of faith, of following Jesus I want to encourage you! Keep on keeping on! Even when it seems tough and the path doesn't seem clear, keep your eyes fixed on him – come again to him, the one who leads, guides, and gives rest and life.

Or if you've not yet started that journey, or you feel like you've got lost and all seems dark, or you feel you've been led astray, look again for the Light of the World, turn to him and he will revive and refresh you ... there is a promise of forgiveness of wrong and new life in him ready and waiting for each of you.