

## **BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!**

But wait, there's more! It sounds like a super salesman doesn't it, listing all the grand features of some appliance – and then saying “but wait there's more! And we'll throw in an extra set of steak knives!!

Some time ago when Dianne and I were living at Pennant Hills, we were looking at new fridges at North Rocks shopping centre – and we had this super salesman who was listing all the wonderful features of this particular model, and then turned his attention to the glass shelves saying “but there's more, these are unbreakable, indestructible shelves, here let me show you” – at which point he proceeded to take out a shelf, put it on a support on the floor and proceeded to jump on it with his full weight. At which point the shelf shattered into a hundred pieces – whoops!

Yes, there was more – unfortunately not what we wanted!! I think we did in fact buy a fridge there but not that one!

If I stand on the beach and look out to sea, I can see the horizon about 5 -6 km away. If however I make the effort and climb one of the local headlands – say 250 metres high I can see further to the horizon about 50 – 60 km away. My vision has been extended and broadened and my perspective has changed. And if I go even higher I can actually see the curvature of the horizon showing that we indeed live on an almost spherical planet and not the flat earth some people incredibly still believe in. Perspective widened – perspective extended.

But wait, there's more!

And this is the one thing I find I am constantly telling myself in my faith – but wait, there's more!

It is important and indeed vital to learn about the roots of our faith. The region and daily life of Palestine, the world of Jesus, the customs and lifestyles of the Hebrew people. We need to know and understand where we are coming from so that we can interpret the timeless message and Gospel and sacrifice of our Lord – Jesus Christ, the significance of the story of Easter we have just passed through and still celebrate this morning. But let us not get too tied up in the past!

Martin Luther King Junior was born in Atlanta Georgia in 1929. Growing up in the deep South, he would have experienced daily discrimination and injustices

because of the evil of segregation operating at the time. I am sure this early life would have fashioned him and had a huge impact on his future stance and defiant preaching. But it would be wrong to concentrate solely on his early background without appreciating the universality of his message. Fight against racism and injustice wherever you find it, wherever it be, and strive towards the intrinsic worth of every human being – and sacrifice for this if needed. And Martin Luther King gave his life doing just that! A universal message for all times and places.

We should not get too parochial in our faith or be limited by the mindsets and customs of earlier times. Our Christian Faith and message is for all times and places, not just the Hebrew people in Palestine.

And what is that message? It is a message of a loving timeless God who has set the Universe in motion with dependable laws which make existence predictable and liveable. Laws which we gradually come to learn about through scientific endeavour. A God who is personal and understands the tragedies and triumphs we experience every day in our lives. But also a God who runs the universe, which is inconceivably vast, interestingly with a surprising number of places where earth-like planets have been discovered and where some form of life might just be possible.

The Bible translator J.B. Phillips wrote a little book in 1952 entitled “Your God Is Too Small”. In this he confronts the limited understanding of God that abounds so often. Too often we think of him as a Resident Policeman, Grand Old Man, God in a Box to be called at will – a Jack-in-a box or a Santa Claus, Managing Director, Pale Galilean perhaps? Or Maybe human, just like us, only moreso, and so on and so forth.

The Apostle Paul has much the same to say in Corinthians

*“Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully even as I am fully known.”*

There are many things at the moment we cannot fully understand about our faith and our God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

- ❖ How does a stark figure on a cross at Calvary somehow make it right for all mankind if we thankfully respond?
- ❖ How does it seem sometimes in the Bible that there are three Gods when surely we are only worshipping one?

- ❖ Was God's Holy Spirit working out His Plan in countries such as, Africa and the earliest civilisations in China and the dreamtime so long ago in early Australia – long long before the days of Jesus?
- ❖ Were the founders of other religions such as Islam responding in any way to God's Spirit as their faith was growing. Now I certainly don't mean the savage barbarity, murder, intolerance and evil strains that seem to find their way into any religion but the undoubted moments of inspiration we find that match so much with what we hold dear in our Christian Faith?
- ❖ What wonders await us in eternal life after our short stays on this earth? So often I have gone to secular non-religious funerals which talk about the wonderful legacy this person has left behind, and all their achievements and the funny little quirky things they did in their life and how he or she was loved respected and why. All very important reminisces to honour the deceased – but it is all looking **BACKWARDS!** What about looking **FORWARDS** as well. We as Christians can proudly proclaim "But wait, there's more!" We may be hazy about the details but we can forthrightly proclaim there is more – much more!

To quote St Paul again from Corinthians

*"But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of men and women, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him".*

In spite of all these uncertainties, we can have the very real certainty that this great God can be beside us loving us dearly, strengthening us, and giving us broader vision each and every day as if we have climbed that headland beside the beach.

- ❖ And we know this because Jesus lived, and died on a cross, rose on Easter Day and lives today.
- ❖ And we know this because in some very special way Jesus of Nazareth was also divine in his closeness to his Father.
- ❖ And we know this because Jesus the Christ came close to us and lived with us and understands our human and fallible ways. He can give us a clearer picture of God the Father, clearer than any one else who has ever lived.

And so we can pray in company with the distressed father bringing his son to Jesus stricken with an evil spirit, and with Thomas burdened by his doubts and with all those who have wrestled with uncertainty down through the ages, “Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.”

Oh yes there’s more – much more!

Amen.

Lawrence Peak