

“Where are we going?” and “What keeps us going?”

Questions, Questions, Questions!

Curious children ask a staggering 73 questions every day (according to a recent study reported in *The Independent*) half of which parents struggle to answer.

The most challenging questions include:

- Why do people die?
- Where did I come from?
- What is God?
- Why do I have to go to school?
- Why is the sky blue?
- Why can't I stay up late?
- When you die who will I live with?

Questions are a vital part of human life, not just when we are children but throughout our lives. Questions like

- Who am I?
- What is the purpose of my life?
- What keeps me going?
- Where am I heading?

The Alpha Course is based on exploring answers together about the deeper questions of life. Asking the right questions can change the direction of our lives.

In today's gospel reading we see one of the most important questions of life. Thomas asked “How can we know the way?” Jesus gave a clear answer, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

In today's world many feel lost and lonely, even young people. The good news is that Jesus is able to bring direction and purpose to everyone's life. He is the way.

Where are we going?

Years ago it was common to see drivers on the roads who were completely lost. But with the coming of the Satnav that has all changed. At the start of their journey you can see drivers punching a code into the Satnav and they are guided accurately to their destination.

What destination are we aiming for in life? Are we hoping to earn lots of money, or perhaps win it in the lottery. Are we aiming to be very popular and be admired by lots of friends. Do we want to constantly have new things, new pleasures or new adventures. We all know that none of these things bring lasting happiness and satisfaction.

Jesus told the famous story about a lost son. He left home taking his father's money with him and went into a far country where he indulged himself in every pleasure he could find until all his money was gone. He was reduced to looking after a farmer's pigs and trying to satisfy his hunger by eating the pig's food. His search for pleasure and happiness had gone seriously wrong.

His life was changed when he stopped to think and he asked himself a question. "How many of my fathers servants have food to spare?" Yet here he was starving with hunger. On that day he got up and decided to return to his Father. His father saw him when he was still and long way off, ran towards him, fell on his neck and kissed him. The wayward son was completely forgiven, dressed in new clothes complete with a ring on his finger. What's more a party was arranged in his honour.

The mission of Jesus is to reconnect us with our Heavenly Father. Jesus said "I am the way... no one comes to the father except through me." Jesus is the way back home, back to our Heavenly Father. And when we return to him what a welcome we receive. No matter how 'ordinary' we are, all heaven rejoices.

Before they were ever called Christians, the first believers were known as 'followers of the way'. And the way was not a place but a person. Jesus is the way. When we programme the Satnav of life, true fulfilment and happiness is found when we key in JESUS! He will reconnect us with our creator. He will bring our souls home to the Father.

What keeps us going?

Once we have programmed the Satnav it doesn't end there; we have motivation, encouragement and help along the way, to make sure we reach our destination. We can look at the map and listen to the voice.

1. Look at the map on screen

The Satnav includes a screen to show our progress on a map. God has given us a spiritual map. The teachings of Jesus are recorded for us in this book, and they are accepted universally as truth. That's why Jesus said "I am the way, the truth and the life." As we travel along we can constantly check our progress by reading the written truth of Jesus. The words of Jesus will encourage us, give us hope, enable us to persevere.

2. Listen to the voice

I remember clearly travelling with some friends who live in Hull. We decided to have a day trip to York and he switched on his Satnav to give us directions. As well as a map on the screen a voice gave clear instructions. Before long our driver said "Why are they taking us down there, that's not the way!" Ignoring the voice I suspect we took a lot longer than we needed to reach our destination.

We need to listen to the voice that Jesus has given to direct us - the voice of the Holy Spirit that is put inside every believer. The prophet said 'Right behind you a voice will say, "This is the way you should go," whether to the right or to the left' (Isaiah 30:21).

Where are we going this morning? And what is keeping us going?

Jesus reminds us "I am the way, the truth and the life." No matter how long any of us have been travelling in the wrong direction, it is never too late to turn round. We can find complete fulfilment and happiness in following Jesus. He is the way. The only way!