

GRASSROOTS
Resources

Godly Steps

Bishop Bill Ray

Lent 2014

EXTRA QUESTIONS





*Extra Biblical Questions
Week 1*

Select from the following
questions

1. “The Lord commanded the man” (Gen 2:15a). A command is not a suggestion, idea or thought; it is a command. Are we as Christians serious about our Lord’s commands? Should we be taking our Lord’s commands more seriously? Discuss.
2. “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...” (Gen 2:16b – 17a) God provided a great choice. There was only one tree that the people were not told to eat. Do we thank God enough for all the range of food we can eat and enjoy? Why is it that we want what we cannot have? How do you stay focused on what God requires?
3. Christians face temptation all the time. How do you address the issue of temptation in your life and stay focussed on God?
4. Psalm 32:5, “Then I acknowledge my sin to you: and my iniquity I did not hide”. How do you acknowledge your sin? Are there times when you would like to, or you hide your sin? How do you move from hiding to acknowledging? Do you feel at one with God when you acknowledge your sin?
5. Psalm 32:9 “I will instruct you, and direct you in the way that you should go: I will fasten my eye upon you, and give you counsel.” How open are we to the Lord? Do we really let God counsel, guide and direct us in all that we do?
6. Psalm 32:12, “Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, and be glad: and shout for joy, all you that are true of heart”. I have been to Christian gatherings and sometimes you wonder whether the people know the joy of the Lord. Do we rejoice enough in the Lord and are we glad? If not, why not? What are some of the joys and blessings?



*Going Further
Week 6*

The Sixth Sunday of Lent has traditionally been known as Palm Sunday and symbolizes peace. This day is also known as Passion Sunday. It is traditional to have the Palm Sunday Gospel before the procession of palms. The Old Testament Reading is from the Prophet Isaiah. The scriptural understanding of a prophet is one who proclaimed God’s message now, at that time.

Isaiah is regarded as one of the major prophets, major in the sense that it is the size of the Biblical book; the other major prophets are Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Other prophetic books are shorter in length such as Micah and Amos; they are often referred to as the minor prophets. There are twelve of minor prophets.

The book of the Prophet Isaiah consists of three sections: Chapters 1 to 39. In these chapters Judah (the Southern Kingdom) is threatened by a powerful neighbour, Assyria. While this was the reality, the key matter for Isaiah was the nation’s sin and disobedience along with their lack of faith and trust in God. Isaiah called the people to life of righteousness and justice.

Chapters 40 to 55: The passage we are studying this week is a portion of a chapter taken from this section. The people of Judah were in exile. They were crushed and without hope. Isaiah proclaimed that the people will be free and will return to Jerusalem. The passage we are studying is one of the four servant songs found in this section. The four servant song passages are:

42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13 to 53:12.

The portion for the Psalm this week is the second half of the Psalm 31. This portion commences with a cry for help and it leads into an agonising situation for the speaker because of grief, failing strength, being the scorn of enemies and list goes on. However, this portion concludes with the Psalmist placing his trust in the Lord, with the assurance that we are in God’s hands and will be delivered from our enemies, also that the Lord’s face shines upon us.

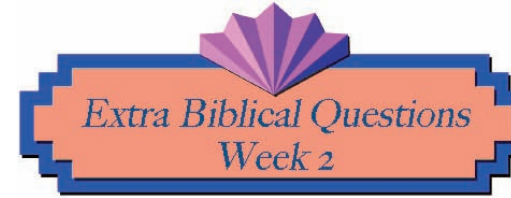
It has been said that the Psalms cover the complete gambit of human life. There are many people who come to our studies who are struggling with a range of issues. Yet, from our studies, we can conclude that even though life may not be going smoothly, God is with us and will protect us. We are called to place our trust in our Lord.



Extra Biblical Questions
Week 5

Select from the following questions

1. Should the Church or we as individuals be more prophetic? Has the voice of prophecy been lost today? If that is the case, how can we as a Church and individuals focus on this ministry?
2. "He led me all around Mortal can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you know." (Ez 37:2) Three key points of this text. The Lord led Ezekiel and he leads us. The Lord questioned Ezekiel and questions us. Ezekiel answered, "O Lord God, you know". Ezekiel did not answer from his point of view he left it with God. What do these three points say to us in our Christian journey? What is a learning for you in this verse and why?
3. "I will put a new spirit within you" (Ez. 37:14) as disciples we need to renew our spirit. One of the dangers is that if we don't we become stale and can revert back to self. In what ways do you renew your spirit so that we can see the hand of God at work in us?
4. Psalm 130:2, "O let your ears consider well: the voice of my supplication", asks that God listens well to our supplication. How well do we prepare our supplications knowing that God does listen well? God can and does say no and at times God says wait. Do you pray expecting God to agree with you? How do you know that God has said, "No"? Does "no" lead you to question God?
5. Psalm 130:5, "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him: and his word is my hope". Do you really wait for the Lord? What process do you use to ensure you are waiting with purpose? In what ways is the "word is my hope"?
6. Psalm 130:6, "My soul looks for the Lord: more than watchmen for the morning, more I say, than watchmen for the morning". Waiting or watching for the morning can be anxious, exhilarating, concerning. Waiting time especially when it's through the night can cover the range of emotions. How does your soul look to the Lord in times of joy or sadness, in the good time and times that are not so good? What helps you in this waiting?



Extra Biblical Questions
Week 2

Select from the following questions

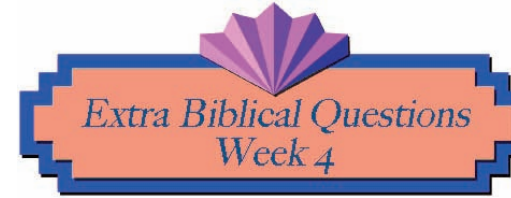
1. "The lord said to Abram, "Go....." (Gen 12:1) Abram went forth in faith trusting God. Has God ever commanded you to "Go"? If so share how God commanded you. Do we "Go" or are we negotiators so that we can have some control? In what ways does this verse challenge us?
2. "I will make you a great nation ..." God made a promise to Abram. God is concerned for us and provides promises to us as we read in Scripture. How do we live into the promises of God? What are some of the insights you have gained in living into the promises of God?
3. "Abram was seventy –five years old". I was once told that excuses sound impressive to people but they are inadequate in the sight of God. We can use all sorts of excuses and not serve God. What are some of the excuses you have used? How has God led you back to his commands or promises? What did you learn as you addressed the issue of excuses as you continue your Christian walk?
4. Psalm 121:5, "The Lord himself is your keeper: the Lord is your defence upon your right hand". Do you really let the Lord be your keeper? In our need to be in control, is it possible for us to try and turn things around? Do we "try to keep the Lord"? Recall a time when you felt the presence of the Lord directing your life.
5. Psalm 121:7, "The Lord will defend you from all evil: it is he who will guard your life". Evil exists. Evil surrounds us. As Christ's disciples it is important that we renounce evil and work to conquer evil. How has the Lord defended you from evil? Can you name times when the Lord guarded your life? How has that experience impacted on your faith journey?
6. Psalm 121:1(b) "but where shall I find help?" How do you find help in the Lord? Maybe, reading the Scriptures, praying, being with fellow Christians or just waiting on the Lord are part of your story. Share your experiences in finding help in the Lord.



Extra Biblical Questions
Week 3

Select from the following questions

1. “From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages” (Ex 17:1) If you have had a wilderness experience in your faith journey share how you coped and what God taught you. How can you minister our people who are going through a wilderness experience? Is it possible to help them to see this a growth point?
2. “So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people?” Have you been in a situation where the only thing to do is to cry out to the Lord? In what we may see as a desperate situation, God is able to use to His glory. Has been your experience? Share your insights?
3. God led Moses to the rock and water was provided. In the midst of the frustration God guided Moses. How open are we to being guided by God so that we are able to do God’s will and God be glorified as was the case verse 6, “Strike the rock, and water will come out of it , so that people may drink. Moses did so”
4. Psalm 95:3, “The Lord is a great God: a great king above all gods”. How do we tell of the greatness of the Lord? Does my life show the greatness of the Lord? We live in a society where there are many competing gods. What are the gods that distract you? How do you remain steadfast in the Lord?
5. Sheep follow the shepherd. What does it mean to follow the shepherd, Jesus Christ himself faithfully? Psalm 95:7, “... we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.” What sort of an impact do we have as Christians in the various pastures of life in which we live? Could we have a greater impact?
6. “When your forebears tested me: put me to proof, though they had seen my works” Psalm 95:9. The works of the Lord, the hand of the Lord is all around us. Yet, the works of the Lord often fail to impact our consciousness. Why is this, the case? What can we do to redress the situation? In what ways do we put the Lord to the test?



Extra Biblical Questions
Week 4

Select from the following questions

1. “I have rejected Saul” (1 Samuel 16:1). These words of the Lord are harsh. Perhaps we need to revisit them. It is said that as Christians we are to reject the sin, but accept the sinner. What if the sinner will not turn to God or love his/her neighbour? As Christians can we be too accommodating, that we water down the standards of God without realising it? Discuss how you address the matter sin in other people’s lives in your faith walk.
2. “Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.” A very human response. Samuel, like us, was focussed on himself rather than trusting in God. How can we make sure we serve God first in all things?
3. 1 Samuel 16:13, “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him (David) in the presence of his brothers”. These were the brothers that God did not choose. There may have been brothers who thought they should have been king. God is always with us, but sometimes the hardest place to live out our faith is in the family. Has this been your experience? How do you seek to share the Lord’s message with family? What are some of the joys, challenges and insights?
4. In life today people, including Christians often talk about what they do not have or you lack. Yet the Psalm says “The Lord is my shepherd: therefore I can lack nothing”, Psalm 23:1. In what ways can Christians show that they lack nothing and that it is the Lord who supplies all our needs?
5. I am very conscious that many people are talking about how quickly life is moving on these days. People have too much to do and not a minute to spare. In what ways can we as Christians make sure we lie down in green pasture and go by the still waters to gain our strength for Christian service? Psalm 23:2.
6. Psalm 23:3, how does God refresh your soul? What do you need to do so that God can refresh your soul? Are you on the right pathway? How do you know you are wandering? What can you do to can you come back to God when you wander?