

Study Notes w/c 8 Jan 12

A New Beginning

Isaiah 43:18-25 + Mark 1:1-12

Icebreaker

- Have you ever made a New Year Resolution?
- What made you do it?
- How long did you keep it going?
- Why is it difficult to keep a resolution going?

Discussion

Read Isaiah 43, but start at v 16 & continue to v 26

- What answer do you think the Israelites might give to God's question in v26?
- What answer could might St Michael's give?

Read Mark 1:1-12

Even though John had seen such dramatic evidence of Jesus' identity, he later had doubts. Read Luke 7:18-22

- Why did Jesus describe his ministry in those terms?
- Compare the words of Jesus with those of Isaiah (Isa29:18-21; 35:5-6; 61:1)
- Is it wrong to ask God questions?
- How could you reassure someone who had genuine doubts about Jesus?

Prayer

Mighty and mysterious God
there are so many things I'm uncertain about,

so many complex areas of life that leave me confused,
searching in vain for answers.
Grant me faith to live with questions.

Lord I believe, **help thou my unbelief**

I struggle to make sense of the events of this world.
Its pain, sorrow, hatred and evil challenge and even contradict my faith,
undermining trust and eroding confidence.
Lord I believe, **help thou my unbelief**

I struggle to reconcile belief with modern-day knowledge,
much in the findings of science and other research seems to squeeze you out.
Lord I believe, **help thou my unbelief**

I struggle to relate commitment to the daily routine,
so much of life seems divorced from faith
Lord I believe, **help thou my unbelief**

I Struggle to let go of the comfortable and the familiar,
to accept that some of my beliefs may need stretching, or even be wrong.
Lord I believe, **help thou my unbelief**

I struggle to recognise that doubts and questions are part pf faith,
able to lead to new insights and a deeper understanding of your purpose.
Lord I believe, **help thou my unbelief**

Amen.