

CHOCOLATE SWIMMING POOL

Nic Denny-Dimitriou - 24th April 2005

John 14:1-7 (1-14)

Jesus spoke these words before going to the cross, knowing he would be tortured and put through this agonizing experience. Words of comfort (contrast with us seeking comfort rather than giving it in similar circumstances).

Intention: to say a few comforting words today.

This could have been a “Centenary Auction” 5-minute sermon.

Deliberately kept short – blessing of Wall of Remembrance (link – associated with those who have died), and “high tea” to follow – good to allow time for community functions.

[“I am the way, the truth and the life”... quite radical words. Will address in a couple of Sunday’s time – in slightly more than 5 minutes!]

Jesus spoke of his father’s house.

Speaking about this at a boys’ primary school (Pridwin, JHB, c 1999), they knew exactly what this meant: Heaven.

Asked “What is it like?” “What would you like it to be?”

They all wanted to answer – answers ranged from predictable to profound:

- Place of Peace
- Lovely pink & white clouds, angels flying about
- No school
- With God always

Finally, last person said...

- Like a big swimming pool filled with chocolate!

Sounds wonderful, to a chocaholic like me! Sounds frivolous, yet profound, as will explain later.

None of us have been there - don’t really know – given few specific details.

Didn’t Jesus make big mistake - leaving that out?

Believe he told us all that was necessary and essential.

He spoke a great deal about the Kingdom of Heaven, about God his Father (whose character he had come to reveal), and the values and purposes of Heaven.

“The Bigger Picture” ... in broad terms, and not specifics of “place and description”.

Specifics given, relate more to how to live according to the KoH values here on earth, than on what to expect in Heaven.

But some points stand out from Scripture, broadly:

Place of choice. No one forced into it.

Choosing (freely) to be with God, and to enjoy the best of his creation, forever.

Peace (more than we can comprehend).

Rev. 21: 1-7 no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain;
every tear wiped away;

God in the midst of his people, with no place for sin / evil).

The seeming frivolity of the “chocolate swimming pool” - (expand – the absolute best, most extravagantly wonderful thing the boy can think of. We may regard it as child-like, yet our own perhaps ‘more sophisticated views’ of heaven must still be short of the mark. God’s intention – for us to enjoy the presence of God, and the most wonderful extravagances of God’s grace possible – except perhaps they won’t be ‘extravagances’, they will just be ‘everyday’ ?).

No roadmap – Yet a map of a different kind: Himself. A person.

“I am the way, the truth and life”.

Only makes sense if he was who he claimed to be, otherwise most arrogant, self-aggrandizing statement (not worthy even of a “good man”, as many patronisingly refer to Jesus!)

The Christian lives in the light of the celebration of Easter, in celebrating the death & the resurrection of Jesus. We have additional comfort as we hear these words.

I pray that we may continue to respond to Jesus, who came to reveal to us the nature of God and the Kingdom of God, and to invite us to choose to be part of it; who came also to comfort us, and to offer us life lived with an eternal meaning.

And especially, I pray that we who call ourselves after the name of Christ,

will look to Jesus, to follow more closely him who IS the Way.