



A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEKEND

28th July, 2023

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."
John 6:68-69

School holidays are here; primary school leavers have had their tearful leavers' events and their school shirts signed by their classmates of seven years. Little ones are brought to 'The Hub' café by parents and grannies in need of things to do! For older students, life-changing exam results are awaited with varying degrees of concern; we remember and pray for them at this time.

Let's also pray for organisations like Scripture Union, with programmes of camps, activity holidays and beach missions; for Christian festivals, outdoor centres and church holiday clubs. For many, a different life-changer comes in such contexts: an encounter with the love of God.

In vacations years ago I volunteered for a Christian camps organisation. We maintained, checked and sent out tentage and equipment for 'canvas' camps in various parts of the country. I remember travelling in a lorry from the equipment base, and making preparations on the sites, putting up tents and so forth.

On arrival in an empty field the key factor was the oven! It was the thing we loaded on last and unloaded first. It was a cast-iron bottle-gas monstrosity of great weight, and the key decision was where to (literally) push it off the back of the lorry. Wherever it landed would be the site of the cook-house to be built around it, because once dumped it was immovable!

It's a silly illustration, but it makes me wonder what that 'heavyweight-immovable' thing is in my life -our lives- or in the lives of those we love. What is the thing around which everything else is built? I don't mean the factor that dictates where we live (although that may be part of it) I mean the central force that orientates our lives and decisions.

John's Gospel tells of a time when Jesus' miraculous deeds and teachings were increasingly alarming for his followers in different ways. John 6:66 tells us that at that stage many turned away, and in verse 67 Jesus challenged his closest disciples, asking, "Do you want to leave too?" (versions vary). Peter (so often the blunt spokesman) comes out with an answer that I -perhaps you- have found myself saying in my heart: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."*

For Peter -for us- that becomes the 'heavyweight-immovable' around which all other aspects of life are built. Do you ever wonder how your life would have gone, were it not built around that key element? I do, -and dread to think! As has been said, "There but by the grace of God go I". Those camp ovens... like many kitchens, were the place of feeding, of warming, of gathering together. Our Lord is that, and much more. Where else would we go?

'Thoughts for the weekend' will be taking a break in August. They will return in September with a different style/theme! If you missed any and would like to fill in your August weekends, the last seven months of them are available on the Hub website. God bless!