

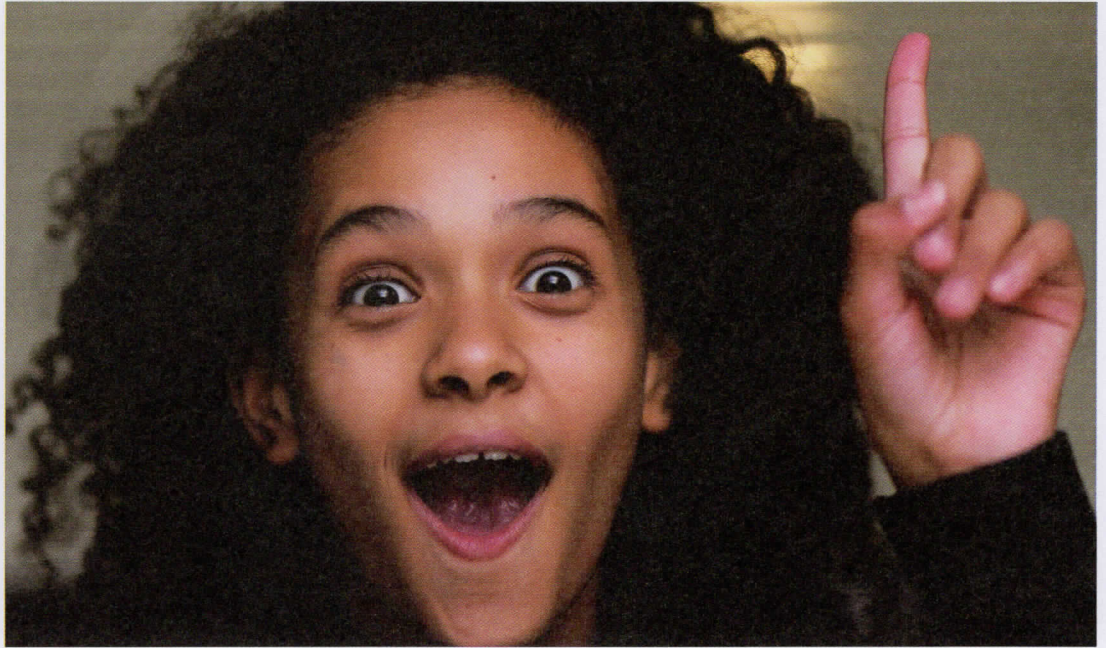
A lightbulb moment

Heather Smith *reflects on*
Matthew 16:13-20

If you had asked an ordinary Jewish person in the first century, or even a Jewish scholar, about their expectations of the Messiah, they would have been unlikely to say that he (and it would have been a he) would be the Son of God. In Jewish circles there was, and still is, no such expectation. Yet this is what Simon (soon to become Peter) declares when he's asked who he believes Jesus is. What kind of person must Jesus have been, to elicit this response from Peter? He must have been quite extraordinary. We have the sense that the response was not thought out, not something that Peter had been considering, not something he had been waiting for an opportunity to say.

Sometimes we surprise ourselves by what we say. We might find ourselves uttering a profound statement that seems to have simply bypassed the brain and come from nowhere. The quote, "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?", attributed to E. M. Forster, puts the experience well. Jesus explains Peter's surprising, and surprised, belief statement by saying that it is his Father in heaven who has revealed it to Peter.

Whether or not we call it divine revelation, there is certainly something spiritual about lightbulb moments that come when we least expect them. They can send us down a completely different track in life. 🌟



Living God, speak to us through our misunderstanding and the fog of life and change the way we think about you. May our lives reflect new perspectives and inspire different relationships and better choices. Amen.

Water

Part 4 – thirst and the Living Water

by Caroline Hodgson

In John's Gospel (4:14), Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, "Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty". His words reach beyond physical need to the deeper thirst of the spirit. We can survive only a few days without water; our bodies depend utterly on it. And, whether or not we know it, we thirst, too, for meaning – for peace, for God.

Augustine of Hippo described this longing: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you." It makes me think of the ocean at its most restless, the waves ceaselessly trying to grasp the shore, make a connection with the land. Jesus offers himself as living water – not something to grasp or possess but a source that continually flows. To drink deeply of his wisdom and loving example is to be satisfied in the way no possession or achievement can provide. 🌊

Walking with Rosie

Our story

by Gillian Cooper

Overheard, as Rosie and I walk through a group of shoppers. First woman: "Of course you know their father left..." Second woman: "... and on Christmas Day!" First woman: "Well..."

Don't you just want to know the rest of the story? Where did he go? What happened next?

Rosie lives in the present; she knows she should have a treat now, but she doesn't remember

that she just had one. We human beings, however, are aware that we are living in the middle of our stories. We all have a partially known and understood past, and a largely unknowable future.

We also live in a bigger story, the story of our world and our universe and the whole human race, the story that begins in the Genesis garden and ends in the Revelation city. We have to accept that we know very little of this story, and trust that its author has the plot in hand. 📖

“Grace, like water, flows to the lowest part.”

Philip Yancey (born 1949), author