

Friends

It is not true to say that I am always in when Mark gets home from work. However, if I am, then I am usually in my office with Ruby, the eldest of our three dogs, lying on the floor near me and the other dogs somewhere else. (Three dogs in one office are not conducive to any sort of work getting done!) She sits there quite happily while I get on with things at my desk, and leaves when I do, albeit with a bit of a “hmpphh!” Some days though she and I are in the office when Mark gets home, and she shifts from elderly dog mode to excited puppy, rushing to the door and scratching and whimpering until she is let out to greet him. She neither knows, nor cares, what else is on the other side of that door, or whether Mark is alone, tired, cross, happy – it doesn’t matter. All she knows is that her beloved master is home and at that moment I cease to be of any interest to her at all.

I recently read a story in an old (1949) “Friendship Book of Francis Gay” where the story is told of someone trying to explain what dying is like. Hearing their dog scratch and whimper at the door in just the way I have described above, he reflects that this is perhaps what death is like. We don’t know what is on the other side of the door, but we recognise the master’s voice, and knowing he is there, we want to get to that place of safety and security.

More than 75 years later, it can seem a somewhat trite story, but as my 11-year-old dog rises to her feet more unsteadily than she would have a year or so ago, her excitement at Mark’s return reminds me both of the story and the promise Jesus made in John 14: “In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would not tell you that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

It has become somewhat old-fashioned to talk about heaven, life after death or what comes next, and yet the Bible is happy to do so, and perhaps also, so should we.

God bless, Vicci