

Musings from the Manse-Week 18 19/07/20

Puzzles. We have discovered the delights of jig saw puzzles! I can't do any of my hobbies at the moment it's all a bit frustrating. Then Jill had the idea of Jigsaw puzzles. So, a socially distanced trip to The Works was in order. There we procured two of the said items and a roll up mat. This was an essential piece of kit as the puzzle would be done on the dining room table. The table would frequently have to be cleared for our "indoors outdoors luxury candle lit suppers with finger buffet". See what I have been reduced to! Watching reruns of *Keeping up appearances*!! Who got the Mrs Bucket reference?

First mass produced Jigsaw 1760, well five identical 100-piece puzzles were made. Jigsaw puzzle pieces were first used as a symbol for autism in 1963 by the United Kingdom's National Autistic Society. The organization chose jigsaw pieces for their logo to represent the "puzzling" nature of autism and the inability to "fit in" due to social differences. This imagery was seen as unsuitable and replaced with a rainbow symbol representing infinity. Largest jig saw 500,000 pieces. However, this caused controversy as it was made in 3000 pre-assembled sections. The official largest (most pieces) is about 21,600 pieces. The logo of Wikipedia is a globe made out of jigsaw pieces. The incomplete sphere appears to have some pieces missing, symbolizing the room to add new knowledge; room to add new knowledge, that leads me nicely on to the subject of Bible study. The more I study I realise the less I know. But it is amazing how the pieces fit together.

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has

conceived"^[b]— *the things God has prepared for those who love him— 10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.*

How simple! What we have in the gospel is a revelation. We must tie this concept of God's revelation to the word "mystery" (verse 7).

In English it does not mean exactly the same thing as in Greek. In English, *mystery* means **"a puzzle that is difficult to solve,"** but in Greek, it means "a secret that is impossible to penetrate." So, the Word of God, His purpose and plan, is a mystery, a secret that is *impossible* to penetrate. Paul is implying that humans would *never* find out what God intends, except that God gives it to us by revelation.

We have in no way earned this revelation. We have it because *it pleased God* to give it to us. He withholds it from others, but He has given it to us. He is in no way obliged to us, as if He owed us something. We could dig in His Word over our entire lifetimes and never come to what He freely gives to us for His purposes, for His own reasons.

Brilliant men like Adam Clarke studied God's Word through the centuries. It took him forty years to produce his famous commentary. The work has lasted some 200 years. In today's scholarship it is more than a little controversial. However, it was done with all sincerity and dedication. Yet, at the end of his efforts, he did not fully penetrate the mystery of what God is doing among men and women. A brilliant man and a brilliant work, yet he emerged from his studies not really understanding the divine purpose that God gives to us without our earning it. On the other hand, it is very likely that many of us never scanned the pages of a Bible before God began to open our minds. Some have, some have not. But God called many of us in that situation, and though we did not deserve it, He revealed His way to us. It is true of my coming to faith. I hadn't read the Bible, but I guess God got fed up of waiting and called me directly. God reveals the truth of his word through the working of His Spirit. When we are open to the Spirit we begin to see the bigger picture and fit the pieces in.

Andrew and Jill