

30th March

Memory verse for the week:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:

I will guide thee with mine eye.

Psalm 32:8.

Understanding the Verse

It is important to understand:

1. Who is speaking: God.
2. Who is being spoken to: the answer will be found if you read the whole Psalm – which is not long. The Lord is speaking to those who are forgiven.

The Bible tells us that all of us are sinners. We all need God's forgiveness. We can tell Him we are sorry and ask Him to forgive us.

The Rest of the Story

Do you remember on the 29th March we heard about a mutiny in the South Seas? Get your maps out... we are off to finish the adventure!

After setting Captain Bligh adrift, Fletcher Christian and the mutineers, headed for **Tubai**, an island south of **Tahiti**. However the people who lived in Tubai did not welcome them. They sailed back to Tahiti where they took on board some of the Tahitians who wanted to come with them. Some of the sailors, like Peter, who had never wanted to be mutineers remained in Tahiti. On board the *Bounty* when she set sail again were eight of the original crew and six Polynesian men (as the people of Tahiti and the South Seas are called) as well as some Polynesian women. What became of them was not known until September, 1808, when a whaler from New England in America, the *Topaz*, spotted Pitcairn Island and landed to take on water.

The Captain of the *Topaz* was Captain Folger. He was very surprised to find native Polynesians on Pitcairn Island who could speak a kind of English! It turned out that the mutineers from the *Bounty* had settled on Pitcairn Island, which had had no one else living on it when they arrived. However, the life the mutineers had led there at first was horrible. There was no one to keep law and order and the men had nothing on which to base their standards of behaviour except selfishness. They distilled spirits from a local plant and were constantly drunk. The result was that they had fought with each other and with the native men and women until *all the men were dead except two*. They had been hoping for some kind of paradise on the island but they found that our sinful human nature comes with us wherever we go.

The two men who remained after all the horrible quarrels and fighting were Edward Young and John Adams. They became ashamed of the violence and horrors they had seen and taken part in. These two remaining mutineers began to read the ship's Bible which had been brought with them on the *Bounty*.

The men repented of their terrible deeds and became Christians. What they read in the Bible showed them how they could be cleansed (cleaned) from their sins and saved from hell. Using the Bible as a textbook they taught the children who had been born to the island settlement to read. By the time Captain Folger arrived, Edward Young had already died of asthma some years back. He was the first man to die a natural death in the little colony. John Adams, although he had had very little education himself, carried on teaching the children until they were all able to read and write at least a little. As they read and studied the Bible, Christianity went completely through the whole

island community.

Captain Folger found that the islanders prayed morning and evening and both before and after their meals. The husbands were faithful to their wives – something which did not happen on other islands in the South Seas. The islanders could recite many Bible passages and were careful to keep a holy Sabbath on Sundays. In their lives every matter large or small was regulated by the Bible which they were in the habit of quoting constantly and which they took very seriously.

The Pitcairn Islanders became very diligent people producing enough food on the rocky island by constant hard work. They had become a serious and good-humoured people. When Captain Folger asked them if there was anything they would like from the *Topaz* they at once replied that they would like some books. He managed to find them 200 books – whalers must have been keen readers in those days! The islanders were delighted. I wonder what the books were!

Map Work

Find Tubai, Pitcairn Island and Tahiti (again!). You can work out how far apart they all are and even draw your own map with a line showing the voyage of the *Bounty*.

How long was it after the original mutiny before the Pitcairn Islanders were discovered by Captain Folger? You will have to look at the previous lesson to help you answer this.

Something to think about

The Bible made a huge difference to the life of the islanders. In the days of this story some people thought that sunny islands in the South Pacific, where food was abundant with little work, were a paradise. In fact such islands, Tahiti for instance, were very far from happy places. Man's greed, unfaithfulness and sin caused as much misery there as elsewhere. In contrast Pitcairn Island was rocky and growing enough food there was hard work. But one visitor noted that after the islanders had turned to Jesus Christ it was as nearer to Paradise as anywhere on the earth!

The Pitcairn Islands are one of the most remote sites of human habitation even today. If you are trusting Jesus as your Saviour, you can help make your family home a happy place – a little Pitcairn Island!

Weather

We are nearly at the end of the month of March. March is supposed to “Come in like a lion and go out like a lamb.” Will March end in mild sunshine? Let's wait and see. Some people call March “March Manyweathers” because it is a month where you can have wind, rain, snow, hail, frost, sunshine or cloud. Keeping a weather diary or chart can be fun. You could prepare one today for April ready to start it later in the week. All you need is a nice big piece of paper. Divide it up so that you have 30 squares or rectangles – say 5 rows of 6. Number them with a little number in one corner and then every day you can write or draw the weather. If you can put it up on a wall or a door somewhere, so much the better. If you want to decorate it you can write “April” and the year in big bright letters at the top. If you want to make it look extra special you could surround each box with different coloured lines. Felt tipped pens would be good for this.

Talk about this:

If you were on an island like the Pitcairn Islanders and could *choose* some books to be given by a passing ship, which books would you like to have? Think of your favourite story books, picture books or factual books. Maybe now would be a good time to dig them out and re read! If you have

room, and it is not too disruptive, you could set your books out on a special shelf as a Library. One person can be librarian or you can take turns. You can make yourselves library tickets and lend out the books to each other bringing them back when you have read them. This can be a good game for older children to play with younger ones and it can encourage them to read. Much fun can be had labelling the Library and even classifying the books! A date stamp would be fun if you could rustle one up somehow but you can have fun with your Library even without one.

A hymn to sing¹

On 30th March 1661 Samuel Rutherford died. We learned about him and the letters he wrote in the lesson for 7th March. At the end of his life Rutherford was facing persecution again. The new king Charles II summoned him to London to face charges of treason because of what he had written in his book *Lex Rex*. In the book he demonstrated that the king is not above the law but that the law, if founded on God's Law, is above the king. Charles would have had him put to death but Rutherford was too ill to go. He wrote to the king: "ere your day [i.e. the day appointed for him to be tried] arrive, I will be where few kings and great folks come..."

Mrs Anne Ross Cousins (1824-1906) was the wife of a Scottish Presbyterian minister. She read Samuel Rutherford's letters and they had a great effect on her. She sat sewing in the manse at Irvine one Saturday evening and as she thought of the letters she wrote nineteen verses based on expressions in the letters and also on the dying words of Rutherford which had been recorded. Six of those verses are still often sung today as the hymn, "The sands of time are sinking". Older children may benefit from reading them, especially if they are familiar with the hymn and they are included in today's Optional Resources files. I have marked the hymn verses in green. Today would be a good day to sing the hymn together.²

1 Information from <https://www.evangelical-times.org/articles/historical/a-little-fair-man-samuel-rutherford/> and Cliff Knight, *A Companion to Christian Hymns* (Gwent, 1993)

2 You can hear the tune here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Acjj0m8Hh6g> if you don't know how it goes.