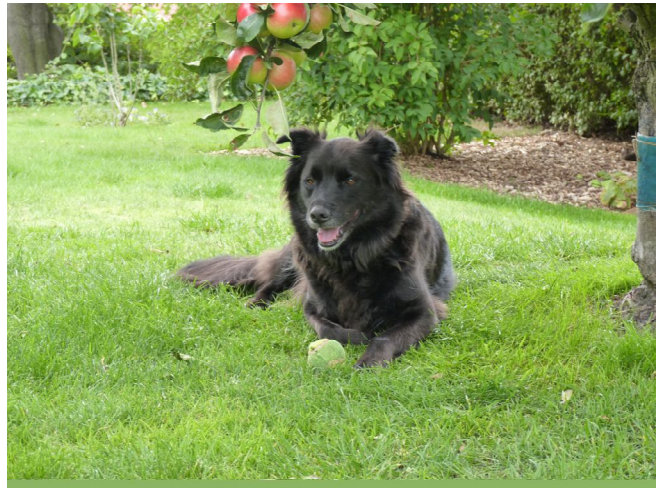


Don't be Afraid.

In our diary beside the name of a visitor was the comment, "Afraid of dogs". She was a sweet person but terrified of dogs. Despite our assurance that the dog would not be allowed into Redacre she looked ashen at morning prayers. She had hardly slept imagining that a big black dog would be lurking around every corner.

But she also wanted to be free and moreover she felt the heavenly Father was saying now was the time to face this fear. As we have a friendly, softie dog it did seem that if the fear could be faced anywhere it could be with us. First of all she watched us from her window as we played with him. It took her immense courage to come into the garden while we held him on the lead and by his collar. She came no nearer than about fifteen metres and was ready to turn and run.



The next day she came nearer. Knowing our dog would barely give anyone more than a glance if we threw the ball we took his lead off. He raced away. Gradually we brought him nearer to her. Two other supportive visitors stayed close to her. When we commanded him to sit, the other visitors could resist him no longer and they started to pet him. Suddenly a voice from behind the dog said, "I touched him, I touched him!" It was the lightest of quick taps but she did it.

The sequel to this story is that her last morning here we allowed the dog into chapel after our prayers. This was an enclosed space. He charged in full of excitement. Without hesitation he made for her and our other visitors. She stiffened but relaxed as he sat wagging his tail at her feet. Then her arms came around him and she hugged him. The perfect dog, never one to spurn affection wherever it comes from, responded appropriately, casting adoring glances in her direction. The camera raced into action – her friends and family would never believe her without proof!

Fears can make cowards of us all in some situations. There are numerous examples in the Bible. Gideon was one very frightened man but he was obedient and with the Lord he faced his fears.ⁱ A fearful Moses wasn't too keen on his assignment either.ⁱⁱ Our guest was one very frightened lady but she was obedient and the Lord was with her. There is an emphasis on self-confidence in our society. Sometimes we don't possess it! That can be a very good thing because at least it humbles us. Our confidence is in God not self.

He can even overcome our fear if we are willing to face it with him.

ⁱ Judges 6

ⁱⁱ Exodus 3