

The Perfect Dog

Almost two years ago we adopted Thomas, a two-year-old collie cross. The trauma of being uprooted was almost too much for him. If a dog can be described as depressed, then he was definitely depressed. We coaxed him to make him eat, encouraged him to bark and protected him from a distinctly antagonistic cat.

Little by little he began to recover, devouring food, howling at the visitors (his way of saying “hello”) and barking loudly if he suspected an intruder. A charm offensive on his part won over the cat. But there was one thing that a few of us were uneasy about – he was consistently well behaved, always good. This may seem like a blessing but it didn’t seem quite natural.

Recently that has changed. He now adopts the “none as deaf as those who don’t want to hear” attitude when it furthers his interests! He knows he is loved and trusts our love so he can forget about being good all the time! What a relief not to be living with a perfect dog!

Sometimes we are a bit like Thomas so anxious to please and be good that we are not quite natural. It doesn’t ring true. It is a strain. We inhabit the worst of both worlds. We are not a happy sinner and neither are we a joyful saint. It is also fraught with dangers. If we really think we are good, we have fallen into spiritual pride and if we think we aren’t we rapidly fall into despair. The root is that we mistrust the love of God.

When Jesus speaks about “freedom” what does he mean? First and foremost it is freedom from the strain of trying to be good all the time. That might sound rather dangerous because doesn’t God want us to be good? He does but it is in his way not ours and it begins when we are honest and real, saying, “Lord, I can’t make it.” He smiles and says, “You don’t have to”.



*I am
loved
just as I
am*