

# Guided by a cloud 47 (Exodus 13:21-22)

Claire W. recently “visited” online a church in Gloucestershire. She would like to share some thoughts from the talk she heard.

The pastor had been asked to speak with some young people at a church he was visiting. This church had a very lively and popular children’s work but nearly all dropped out as teenagers and they wondered why. He asked some young people to draw pictures representing what they thought God was like. The first was of an old man with a white beard and a red face. “Why the red face?” he asked. The answer came that God is always angry. The second had lots of speech bubbles saying “Do this...”, “Don’t do that...” because according to this young person God is always telling people off; critical. The third picture was blank! Why? Because this young person thinks that God is distant and not interested. No wonder they were no longer interested in coming to church if that’s the impression they have of God.

It made me wonder about the ideas that many people we know have about God. If people have these sorts of images of what God is like then it is a challenge to us to somehow show people the loving God. Steve shared the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son which speak so powerfully about how precious each one of us is to God and show us how passionately he loves us, cares for us and wants a relationship with us.



## Worship time

[Your love so great](#)

[Here I stand forgiven](#)

[I love you Lord \(the goodness of God\)](#)

**Psalm 23 – a comparison:** The pastor then went on to re-writing Psalm 23 as it might be for someone who does not know the love, kindness and mercy of God (*in italics*). The comparison (**in bold**) is the actual psalm and what we know to be true.

*The Lord is not my shepherd, I constantly want,*

**The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.**

*In discontentment I graze on parched fields,*

**He makes me lie down in green pastures,**

*I find no water to quench my thirst,*

**He leads me beside quiet waters,**

*My soul is weary and I wander in the paths of sinfulness seeking pleasure'*

**He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.**

*And when I walk in the darkness of danger and death I am afraid and alone,*

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;**

*No power or principle gives me comfort,*

**Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

*There is no nourishment to strengthen me against my enemies,*

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.**

*There is no anointing for my head; my life is empty*

**You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

*Even though God’s goodness and mercy have been available all the days of my life, I shall be*

*banished from the house of the Lord forever.*

**Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

**I think that deserves a big “Hallelujah” and “Amen”!!**

“Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you” 1Peter 5:7