

Worship@Home 9th April 2023

Easter Sunday with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Holy God, we offer you our praise this Easter morning for the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, Friend, and Saviour. By your Holy Spirit fill us with your resurrection power and remind us of the new life that is given to us in Christ, who died and was raised for us so that we might live forever. In Jesus name, Amen.

StF 298 – Christ the Lord is risen today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRFL4mFtv14>

Christ the Lord is risen today; Alleluia!
All creation joins to say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high; Alleluia!
Sing, you heavens; let earth, reply: Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done; Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won' Alleluia!
Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Alleluia!
Christ has burst the gates of hell: Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King; Alleluia!
Where, o death, is now your sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save: Alleluia!
Where's your victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led; Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head; Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise; Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies: Alleluia!

King of Glory! Soul of bliss! Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this; Alleluia!
You to know, your power to prove; Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love: Alleluia!

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Please read:

John 20:1-18

<https://bible.oremus.org/?q1=259107396>

Time to Reflect

Happy Easter! This Sunday is the most significant date in the Christian Calendar; the one when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the new life that he offers us. In his rising we are shown that sin and death have been defeated and that a place in Christ's eternal kingdom has been made for us.

Yet for such a dramatic event, it is surprising that the account that we have in John's gospel is so understated. In John's account, we have no pre-dawn earthquakes or soldiers fainting. Like all four of the gospels, we also have absolutely no description of the moment Jesus emerged from the tomb. It begins simply: '*While it was still dark*' that first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.

Mary comes with no particular expectation. However, she notices that the stone has been moved and realises that something has happened to the body of Jesus. Mary is shocked and she runs back to tell the disciples. Then Peter and the other disciple, probably John, go to the tomb and come to the same conclusion, albeit only after a bit more of a thorough investigation of the alleged crime scene. They believe that someone has taken Jesus body, not yet realising or believing that he had risen from the dead.

What follows is a scene of utter devastation, where Mary Magdalene weeps over this latest indignity piled on the friend that she loved. Then, in the midst of her tears, someone appears, who she presumes is the gardener, asking why she is crying? Why was Mary crying? For the same reason that so many people weep the world over: Because of death's irretrievable finality; because the one that she loved was gone and now she does not even have his body to tend to.

In recounting the Easter story it is important for us to remember that Easter did not happen in a bright and happy church sanctuary. It happens in a garden, with Mary Magdalene crying, while it was still dark. Easter happens amidst fear, confusion, shock and sadness. Easter happens in the most difficult place with Mary facing the harsh reality of death. However, it is here, while it is still dark and the morning light is only dimly showing, that God reveals himself in the Risen Christ. Because it is in that time of fear and despair when Easter hope is most needed.

In the darkness, the light of God is revealed through his resurrection power. The promise of God is revealed, with fear and despair giving way to joy.

The Risen Christ is revealed to Mary and as she recognises him her tears of sorrow become tears of joy. As she cries out 'Rabboni' you can imagine Mary reaching out to hug Jesus. Yet Jesus responds by telling her not to hold on to him. Mary is not to linger in the garden; she has to go and tell the other disciples the good news, because in their grief they needed to hear and know what God has done. In the same way we are told to share the good news of the resurrection, so that a weeping world can find hope and joy in the promise of God revealed in the risen Jesus.

In this season of Easter we might be facing any number of challenges and griefs. This might lead us to think that it is difficult, perhaps even impossible, to celebrate Easter. Yet Christ rose from the dead to show all those who cry and weep that there is hope; hope of death defeated and new life that is eternal. This is why we rejoice and declare a Happy Easter. Knowing nothing, not even death, can overcome God's love and his promises. So, may the risen Christ bring you hope, peace, and joy this Eastertide as we celebrate the gift of life given in Jesus. Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

StF 313 – *Thine be the glory*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvnFWWWhFIGg>

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering son,
endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away
kept the folded grave-clothes, where thy body lay:

[Chorus]

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth,
death hath lost its sting:

[Chorus]

No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught without thee: Aid us in our strife;
make us more the conquerors
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above:

[Chorus]

Edmond Budry (1854-1932)

translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875 – 1939)

Final Prayer

As Christ burst forth from the tomb,
may new life burst forth from us
and show itself in acts of love
and healing to a hurting world.

And may the same Christ,
who lives forever and is the source of our new life, keep your hearts
rejoicing and grant you peace this day and always. Amen.

By Joanna Harader in 'Spacious Faith'.

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/04/easter-benediction.html>

