

Worship@Home 23rd April 2023 Third Sunday in Eastertide with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Like those disciples on the road to Emmaus, we struggle to recognise Christ in the everyday journey of our lives. Gracious God, open us to the presence of your Son, through the gift of your Holy Spirit, and enable us to see him and share in his resurrection power. May we be transformed to be more like Christ; with our hearts and minds open to you and all your good purposes for us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

StF 295 – Alleluia, Alleluia,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZcCnLfufQs>

*Alleluia, alleluia,
give thanks to the risen Lord,
alleluia, alleluia,
give praise to his name.*

Jesus is Lord of all the earth;
he is the King of creation: *[Refrain]*

Spread the good news o'er all the earth:
Jesus has died and has risen: *[Refrain]*

We have been crucified with Christ;
now we shall live for ever: *[Refrain]*

God has proclaimed the just reward:
new life for all! Alleluia! *[Refrain]*

Come, let us praise the living God,
joyfully sing to our Saviour: *[Refrain]*

Donald Fishel (b.1950)
Words & Music © 1973 The Word of God, Ann Arbor, MI,
USA. International Liturgy Publications.
Song CCLI Number: 32376

Please read:
Luke 24:13-35
<https://bible.oremus.org/?q|260848342>

Or watch
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNbaiT8m2M4>

Time to Reflect

When I was young I enjoyed reading the 'Where's Wally' books. On each page you were presented a picture filled with people and the challenge was to find the character, Wally, in his distinctive striped clothing. It would often take me quite some time before I recognised where Wally was in any given situation.

The reading that we have today, taken from Luke's Gospel, concerns two disciples who are leaving Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus. Despite hearing of the resurrection, they do not yet believe that Jesus has risen. In their fear and uncertainty a man draws near and accompanies them. They enter into conversation and as they do the disciple's hearts begin to burn within them as the man explains how all the events that had occurred, from Moses to Christ, related to God promises and purposes. After inviting the man to join them for dinner and then sharing in bread and wine, their eyes are opened, and they realise the man they have been talking to and are breaking bread with is the risen Jesus. Then when Jesus disappears they head back to Jerusalem to tell the apostles what had happened. Their sorrow and fear had been replaced by joy and wonder through their encounter with the Risen Christ.

In this Easter season you may also find yourself in a place of fear and sorrow. Yet this passage reminds us that whatever we are experiencing we have Jesus present with us. Accompanying us on the journey and encouraging us with his Word, through the constant presence of the Holy Spirit.

In the passage, the disciples do not recognise Jesus on the road, but they find that their hearts were burning inside them when they spoke to him. This reminds me of the experience of Revd John Wesley, the Anglican Minister who founded the Methodist movement, who himself had his heart 'strangely warmed' when listening to Luther's preface to Paul's Letter to the Romans. In hearing and knowing what God had done for him in Christ, taking his sin away and offering him new life, Wesley was encouraged and renewed. His heart-warming experience commenced a new chapter in his life and ministry, in which he sought to spread the Gospel and scriptural holiness throughout the land.

We too need to have our hearts 'strangely warmed' by the presence of Christ that is offered to us through God's Holy Spirit. We need encouragement in our lives of discipleship so that our fear and sorrow can be relieved by God's joy and the assurance of his love and forgiveness. We also need God's Word and Spirit to equip and enable us to share the good news with those around us so others will come to know the living presence of God in Christ and the Spirit.

We can encounter Jesus in many different ways: In prayer, worship and fellowship together, through scripture, and the sacraments. Jesus tells his disciples that they will encounter him when they help those who are the least amongst them and are in need (Matthew 25:34-40) through works of mercy. In all of these things the Holy Spirit is present with us and revealing Christ to us.

As a child I enjoyed reading the 'Where's Wally' books and searching for him. Our calling as Christians is to follow Jesus, which involves recognising where he is and where he is leading us. So let us pray that we will continue to encounter the living God and that we might depend on Christ for our hope, love, and joy this Eastertide as he encourages and guides us. For Christ is alive and he is with us. Amen.

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 345 – And can it be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJSRpgBQ9qw>

And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
let angel minds enquire no more.

He left his Father's throne above --
so free, so infinite his grace --
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
for, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray --
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Final Prayer

Meet us, Lord, on the road to Emmaus,
Guide us on the path toward our destination,
and renew our strength as we continue to walk
and commune with you.

Open our eyes, so we see the signs of your
presence around us; Open our hearts, so we
may receive your peace and love;
and empower us to pass on to others
the grace you have shared with us so freely.
Amen.

A prayer by Revd Frank Schaefer:

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/04/emmaus-road-prayer.html>