

Morning Service 10th May 2020

Thank you for joining us for this morning service for fifth Sunday after Easter. Today we look at a passage from the bible often read at Funerals – John 14 where Jesus says ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’

The Greeting – *As the Easter Candle is lit*

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:

He has given us new life and hope by raising Jesus from the dead!

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Jesus said, I am the Way – come!

Jesus said, I am the Way and the Truth – come and receive.

Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life – come, receive, and respond.

Father, Creator,

God is with us:

Do not fear.

Jesus, redeemer,

God is with us:

Do not fear.

Holy Spirit, sustainer,

God is with us:

Do not fear.

Amen.

Our first song today is ‘All I once held dear’

Song

**All I once held dear, built my life upon
All this world reveres, and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now, compared to this
*Knowing you, Jesus
Knowing you, there is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you, Lord***

**Now my heart's desire is to know you more
To be found in you and known as yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn
All-surpassing gift of righteousness**

Oh, to know the power of your risen life
And to know You in Your sufferings
To become like you in your death, my Lord
So with you to live and never die
Knowing you, Jesus
Knowing you, there is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you, Lord

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, as we gather in your name,
listen to us and bring us peace;
be our rock and our refuge, that we may be made strong;
let your face shine upon us, that we may show your love.
Amen.

Prayer of penitence

Forgive us, loving Lord, that we have strayed from your way.
Forgive us for the times our lives have not been shaped by your truth.
Forgive us for denying your life in us and in others, by the way we have lived.
In the name of Jesus, the way, the truth and the life, we pray.
Amen.

May God who loved the world so much that He sent His Son to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve Him in this world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer for Today

Risen Christ,
your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Bible Reading *John 14:1-14 (NIV)*

14 Jesus said 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.'

⁵ Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

⁶ Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.' ⁸ Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.'

⁹ Jesus answered: 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I

am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Talk

Where is God? It's a question that some listening and watching today might be asking. Most frequently I speak on this gospel reading we've just heard at funeral services, where that question is often unspoken, but there nevertheless. Why did this happen? What now?

We've now moved back from the resurrection appearances of Jesus to a time when he was preparing his friends for his departure – for his death, resurrection and ascension, for the giving of the Holy Spirit to them. We find ourselves in John's gospel, where things are often not as they seem. Words which seem obvious cannot be taken simply at face value. I wonder, when you heard that gospel reading a few moments ago, which words or phrases stood out for you? Maybe 'do not be troubled', 'in my Father's house are many rooms', or 'I am the way, the truth and the life'. Or maybe you focused on the questions/challenges made by Philip and Thomas (there he is again!). Thomas's blunt 'where are you going?' is matched by Philip's 'show us the father'. Over the last few weeks many of us have been using 'zoom' – one thing zoom can't handle very well is people speaking over each other – that's what it seems like is going on here, the disciples are so fearful of what lies ahead, their minds are so racing with all sorts of possibilities that they are speaking over Jesus instead of listening carefully to him. So I invite you to listen carefully to Jesus now. Listen to what he says – don't interrupt him!

- 1) He says to troubled hearts 'don't be troubled' – immediately we want to jump in – don't you know what's going on, Jesus – just like the disciples did when they were on a lake in the middle of the storm, waking Jesus up who then calmed the storm. "If there is, anywhere on earth, a lover of God who is always kept safe, I know nothing of it, for it was not shown to me. But this was shown: that in falling and rising again we are always kept in that same precious love." Julian of Norwich. Think back over the times you have known the peace of Jesus calming your heart – go back to that time and listen to him saying again – believe and trust. I know it's difficult but ask him to help you.
- 2) Hear again Jesus saying 'I go to prepare a place for you' – by all means, focus on eternity, but don't just think about eternal promises. It's clear from where this bible passage comes that it is about the future, but it's also about something else. Jesus is promising to his friends his presence when he'd died, risen and ascended to his Father. His daily, continued presence. He is going to stay, rest, abide with them, just as we considered a few weeks ago as he met the two heading back home to Emmaus.
- 3) Finally, focus on the 'I am the way, the truth and the life' – where do you put the emphasis? Some of us tend to put it on the "I" – the exclusive claim that Jesus is the only way to the Father – that's fine and true, but leave room for God's grace, won't you. What about emphasising the word 'am' instead? Back to the present reality of Jesus presence with us, then. How is he for us way, truth and life? He is life himself, even in the face of death. He is truth, completely and utterly, and as he says elsewhere, a truth that sets us free. He is way – a pilgrimage journey where we are presently united with God through Jesus and his Father in the power of the Spirit, and a journey which calls us to serve God as we love him and neighbour too.

This Gospel reading then, is an invitation in our troubled times to be united with Jesus here and now, not just after this life in our prepared mansions.

Note how this passage ends - with a promise that our praying, believing and doing will be even greater now than then. In just a few week's time we will be joining in this year's 'Thy Kingdom come' worldwide prayer initiative, more needed now than ever. Have a look at the details on the notice sheet and join in with others for prayer.

Jesus, then, was preparing his friends for his return to his Father. But not as a separation from his friends, but the way through his risen life and the presence of the Holy Spirit that our relationship with God will be deeper, clearer and stronger, when we are drawn into the eternal relationship of love at the heart of the Holy Trinity, and demonstrate that love in prayer and sacrificial living. Amen.

Response

Jesus says: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives give I unto you.

Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

And also with you.

The Creed *based on 1 Cor 15:3-7*

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ

**Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles:
this we have received, and this we believe. Amen.**

The prayers

Lord Jesus, we pray for those who are troubled today,
those worried about money, those looking for work,
those who don't feel safe.

May they find in you a way forward.

We pray for those whose journey of life is testing,
those who live in places of violence,
those who are a long way from family,
those whose health is fragile.

May they find in you a place to rest.

We pray for those who feel unwanted,
those who have left their countries,
those who live on city streets, those who are neglected.

May they find in you a welcome.

Lord Jesus, we pray for all places of need,
and all people in trouble.

**As we make room for them in our prayers,
may we make room for them in our lives. Amen.**

We keep a moment for our own prayers - say slowly, and out loud, Jesus' words: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me' (John 14.1) Name things that are troubling you one by one, and then say once again Jesus' words.

We join together as Jesus taught us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. for ever and ever. Amen**

Song

**1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n to earth come down:
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.**

**2 Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit,
let us find the promised rest:
take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.**

**3 Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.**

**4 Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be:
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
'til in heav'n we take our place,**

**'til we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

Closing reflective prayer

Prepare for us a place

where hearts can dwell in peace,
where souls can find their rest,
where bodies can heal their wounds.

Prepare for us a place

where longings are fulfilled,
where hunger is satisfied,
where thirst is quenched.

Prepare for us a place

where wrongs are set right,
where injustice finds an end,
where hatred finds no victim.

Prepare for us a place

where lands smell of Eden,
where rivers run free,
where fruit grows in plenty.

Prepare for us

a home,
a paradise,
a kingdom.

Prepare for us a place

where God is:
the loving Creator,
the passionate Son,
the life-giving Spirit,
and lead us there.

Prepare in us a place

where love can grow,
where visions can flourish,
where hope can spring.

Prepare in us a place

where truth is lived,
where justice matters,
where good triumphs.

Prepare in us a place

a home,
a paradise,
a seed of the kingdom.

Prepare in us a place

where God is:
the loving Creator,
the passionate Son,
the life-giving Spirit,
and lead us in your way.

Blessing

May God bless you, guide you and direct you.
May God bless you, give you strength and the assurance of his love.
May God bless you and fill your life with his presence,
today and always.

Amen.

Thank you for following our service today.

Details of our next services are found on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PCDChurches/> where you can watch the service live or catch up later, and you'll find this week's notice sheet and other useful information on the church website pcd.org.uk

*Please also contact the Vicar, Rev John Musson if you need any help or just for a chat! vicar@pcd.org.uk
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