

EASTER DAY - 12th April 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes while churches are closed.

A free resource funded by **twelvebaskets**.

Prayer

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Lord's day is here and amongst all the uncertainty around the world, may I find ways to celebrate the resurrection. Show me your new life, risen Christ. Amen. ¹

Hymn: Singing the Faith 305 – Low in the grave he lay [YouTube](#) or [Organ](#)

Low in the grave he lay, Jesus, my Saviour,
waiting the coming day, Jesus, my Lord:

*Up from the grave he arose,
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
he arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives for ever with his saints to reign:
He arose! He arose!
Alleluia! Christ arose!*

Vainly they watch his bed, Jesus, my Saviour;
vainly they seal the dead, Jesus, my Lord:

Death cannot keep his prey, Jesus, my Saviour;
he tore the bars away, Jesus, my Lord:

Robert Lowry (1826-1899)

Prayers

Living, life-giving God, who desires for all people life in all its fullness,
Who desires for all people lives filled with signs of hope and promise,
As I gather this Easter morning may I journey with you.
I add my voice to the generations who have worshipped and witnessed,
Who have met to pray, sing and tell your story. So this morning I bring you my thanks and praise.

For in your all enveloping love, you breathed the world into life and formed me in your own image.
I ignored you and sidelined you, choosing to put myself first.
But you did not leave me in that place of darkness and isolation
But chose to give yourself in your son Jesus,
To experience our life, our joys, our fears and pain.
As he lived our life, he also died our death.

But the tomb could not contain him, and you raised him from death that I too might enter into a relationship with my living Lord.

So all praise and glory be given to you. Amen. ²

Say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: Colossians 3: 1-4 The New Life in Christ ³ [Click to hear reading](#) **Play to 0:28**

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

John 20:1-18 The Resurrection of Jesus ³ [Click to hear reading](#) **Play to 2:50**

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped round Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?' 'They have taken my Lord away,' she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' ¹⁴ At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?'

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Mary.'

She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means 'Teacher').

¹⁷ Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' "

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflections on the readings

Why are we here? What happens when we die? What is the meaning of life?

(If you listened to the Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy, perhaps you are already muttering '42').

Is this all there is to existence? Perhaps these 'big questions' feel more pertinent than ever at the moment. Easter Sunday doesn't necessarily answer all the big questions, and the Easter story raises one or two of its own...But Easter does add a huge portion of hope to the equation.

That's what this day is all about: because he lives, I can face tomorrow. On Easter Sunday, or Resurrection Sunday as it is in some traditions, we celebrate the remarkable crescendo of the gospel stories – where the crucified Jesus becomes the risen Jesus.

Where death loses its sting. Where life, love and hope win against death, hate and despair. This crucial moment in the Christian story, and in the story of humanity, doesn't immediately bring about the end of all that is evil, unjust or broken in our world.

Easter doesn't solve the world's problems. We know that, as we live through the pain and confusion of a global pandemic. But that is why Easter matters. Because, at Easter, we realise that "the worst thing is never the last thing" (to quote Pastor Adam Hamilton from the Church of the Resurrection in the USA). At Easter, we learn that "it will be alright in the end, and if it's not alright, it's not the end" (to quote Mark Kermode, film reviewer and podcaster).

The big questions, the uncertainty and the pain don't disappear with the resurrection. But everything seems a little bit brighter. That's what it means to be a resurrection people, to be an 'Easter people' – we have hope.

So when it comes to questions about the afterlife, we can't possibly know for certain what it will look like. But because of Jesus, because we believe in resurrection, we have hope. When it comes to existential questions like 'why are we here?' or 'what is the meaning of life?', we don't know quite how to answer – but we have hope.

When we think about the future, when we face up to uncertainty and anxiety, when we watch the news or live with the pain of our families and friends, we can't bring immediate resolution. We can't fix everything overnight. But we have hope.

As Paul puts it in Colossians, we are 'made alive' in Christ. We live life to the full, and we live it with hope, because we are resurrection people.

On that first Easter, Jesus' followers found themselves locked away inside - scared, confused, bereaved. Their whole way of life, what was normal to them, their lives for the last few years, had been taken away from them, and so suddenly as well. So as we sit in our homes, with so much of our normal not available to us, let us briefly look forward in the Gospel. Pentecost was just around the corner for them – our Pentecost is just off in the distance. The disciples will discover that they could not go back to how it had been, however much they wanted to... But that is for the coming weeks. So today, as you go about your day, whatever that involves, go about it with hope. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Hallelujah! ⁴

Prayers of intercession ⁵

You might like to watch this short video from All We Can, in which one of their members of staff, Steve Adams, leads us in prayer for coming through this 'winter season' and for new life on the other side – a prayer of resurrection, if you will. [All We Can](#)

Then hold a moment of quiet. Reflect on all you have read, heard and thought about so far in this short act of worship. What do you need to bring to God in prayer?

[Pause]

In the quiet, I bring myself to you, Lord Jesus. Move through me, that I might have the courage for this day, this week, this month, this strange 'winter season'.

[Pray for the individuals, families, communities and situations that are on your heart today. Say the name of the person or situation you are praying for out loud.]

Loving God, amongst the darkness and uncertainty, shine your light.
May I be a light to others this day, this week and in the months ahead, in whatever way I can.
In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Hymn Singing the Faith 313 – Thine be the glory [YouTube](#) or [Organ only](#)

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

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

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Edmond Budry (1854-1932)

Blessing

I celebrate the miracle of resurrection, and recognise the need for new life in the world around me. I belong to your people Lord, the people of new life – help me to use my gifts and my life to inspire new life and to enable resurrection hope to be seen, in Jesus' name. Amen ⁶

Acknowledgements

- 1 Prayers by Tim Baker
- 2 Prayers by Christine Dutton
3. Bible Text is from New International Version Bible, Anglicized. Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblica. Used by permission. All rights reserved
- 4 Reflection written by Tim Baker
- 5 Prayers provided by All We Can – Methodist Relief and Development
- 6 Additional prayers by Tim Baker

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