

HAEBEA Home Worship: No.60 – 3rd Sunday of Easter

18th April 2021 – Revd Cecil White

Sentence - I am the living One; I was dead, and now I am alive for evermore. *Revelation 1:18*

Prayer

God of life and love,
your Son made himself known to his disciples
in the breaking of bread.
Open the eyes of our faith,
that we may see him in his redeeming work,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and for ever. Amen



Bible reading – Luke 24:36-48

Thoughts

‘The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!’, so says the Church. This Easter was a cause for great celebration, perhaps in ways we did not anticipate. Churches gathered for worship for the first time in weeks, months even. Having been ‘bereaved’ of the great Easter celebration in 2020 due to the pandemic, many were determined to show their resilient faith and declare the Easter acclamation: ‘The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!’

I can hear some say, “Why do you have to harp on about the resurrection? Surely Easter is over.” Well, in one sense it is for we celebrated it two weeks ago due to its nearness to the Jewish lunar festival of Passover. But in another sense Easter is a present reality, for we need to remember that Easter is something that is lived out in people’s lives and not simply bound by an annual event. Just as we are reminded in the Lord’s Supper to ‘show forth the Lord’s death until he come’, we demonstrate our Easter faith every Sunday, which is why we also call it the Lord’s Day. So, Christians are Easter people all year round! So, ‘harp on’ we must.

Today we are reminded once again of the resurrection story with today’s gospel reading being no exception. Following the Lord’s appearance on the road to Emmaus and in the breaking of bread in the presence of witnesses, he then appears to his disciples in Jerusalem. Ironically, when he appears, he greets them with words of peace and they appear to recoil, alarmed and terrified. It does not seem like a peaceable arrival on Jesus’s part.

Having shown them his hands and feet the disciples display both joy and disbelief. I think we can safely assume that this episode demonstrates some of the confusion that Christ’s resurrection presents. The disciples need time to assimilate things and they are not quite there yet. The Lord then goes on to set his resurrection in the context of God’s grand scheme, explaining it through the lens of the law of Moses, the psalms, and the prophets.

The resurrection appearances of our Lord clearly show us that people (even witnesses to the event) need both time and a degree of understanding to make sense of things. This is the advantage of dwelling in the Easter season for a few weeks before we celebrate Pentecost and the birth of the church on 23 May. The Church can teach us by the holy scriptures the significance of Jesus rising from the dead. We need to allow the Holy Spirit room to guide us through the wonder of mystery and God’s eternal purpose of love.

Today, take time to sense the meaning of the resurrection of Christ for yourself. What was your first ever recollection of Easter and what did it mean this year? What have subsequent Easter festivities meant to you? What is your favourite Easter hymn or song? What might Easter hope instil in you as you continue this strange but challenging journey through the Covid-19 pandemic? Are you seeing the new life all around you in flora and fauna? Are you enlivened by birdsong in the early hours? Where do you sense that 'the Lord is risen' in your life?

Hymn by George Ratcliffe Woodward

1. This joyful Eastertide, away with sin and sorrow.
My Love, the Crucified, hath sprung to life this morrow. (To refrain)

Refrain: Had Christ, that once was slain, ne'er burst his three-day prison,
Our faith had been in vain: but now hath Christ arisen.
2. My flesh in hope shall rest, and for a season slumber:
Till trump from east to west shall wake the dead in number. (To refrain)
3. Death's flood hath lost his chill, since Jesus crossed the river:
Lover of souls, from ill my passing soul deliver. (To refrain)

Prayers

Remember, O Lord,
your holy Church throughout the world
and reveal your glory among the nations.
Save your people
and bless those who belong to you,
shepherd them and carry them for ever.

Remember, O lord,
our families and friends,
and surround them with your steadfast love.

Remember, O Lord,
those who are sick,
those who suffer pain or loneliness or grief,
those who draw near to death,
and those whom we name
in our hearts before you . . .

Blessing

May God the Father make us holy in his love;
God the Son enrich us with his grace;
God the Holy Spirit strengthen us with joy;
may the Lord bless us
and keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

Comfort them with your presence,
sustain them by your promises,
grant them your peace.

And now, rejoicing
in the communion of the saints,
we remember with thanksgiving
all your faithful servants
and those dear to us
who serve you in the glory of heaven.
Keep us in unbroken fellowship
with your whole Church in heaven and on earth,
and bring us at the last
to the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's prayer: Our Father . . .

