

Sunday 22nd November 2020

The paper-version Service

The church is meeting on paper and online

All of our services are online www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk but this weekly sheet captures our Sunday service for those without internet.

To Begin: Find a Bible. If safe, perhaps light a candle. Find a comfortable place and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read; or even sing, the modern song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



Opening Prayer: Father God, thank you for your welcome to us today. Thank you that your perfect love drives out all fear. Help us know the full extent of your love, to receive your forgiveness, and live in your grace. Lead us by your Spirit in worship to you now, in the name of Jesus. **Amen**

Song:

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene
And wonder how He could love me
A sinner condemned, unclean

*How marvellous, how wonderful
And my song will ever be
How marvellous, how wonderful
Is my Saviour's love for me*

He took my sins and my sorrows
He made them his very own
He bore the burden to Calvary
He suffered and died for me

*How marvellous, how wonderful
And my song will ever be
How marvellous, how wonderful
Is my Saviour's love for me*

When with ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see
It will be my joy through the ages
To sing of His love for me

*How marvellous, how wonderful
And my song will ever be
How marvellous, how wonderful
Is my Saviour's love for me*

Read: Luke 24:36-50

How are we deployed? (A summary of the talk given by Jon Rooke)

The confinement

After Jesus is crucified and dies the disciples find themselves staying behind closed doors. Probably locked in and feeling disconnected from Jesus. They are worried. What will happen next? They are troubled, doubting that Jesus was the person he said he was. Instead of going out into the community around them, they are now concerned with their own protection. They are waiting, not knowing if they will be able to safely walk around again and, if so, how will the world be different for them.

In some ways, it sounds a little bit like a lockdown. Some of us are spending more time than we would like inside our houses. Some of us are worried about our safety at work or in the shops. Some of us wonder with uncertainty what the world will be like. All of us are in some way or another, waiting, waiting for a new normal that we can't quite imagine.

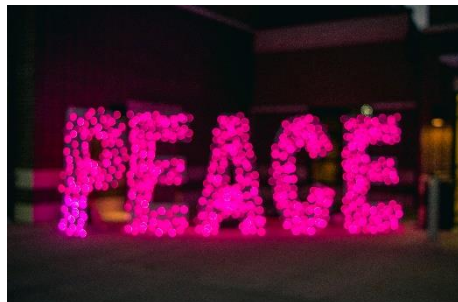
Where is Jesus in all of this? Where is the hope and opportunity in all of this? Where is the good news?

How Jesus treats them

Jesus himself stands among the disciples. He comes to them and is present in the most vivid way that they could have hoped for. He doesn't

keep himself distant. Jesus is not stand-offish.

Jesus says 'Peace be with you'. I think when Jesus says this, he means that deep peace. The peace in the storm. The peace that holds us steady.



He then reassures them that he really is right there beside them. He lets them look, and even touch him if they need to. Sometimes we may doubt that God is with us, especially when things are difficult, when we are afraid and wonder why Jesus doesn't seem to be around just when we need him. But Jesus is there, in our room, and he gently invites us to see for ourselves, to spend time looking upon him. Jesus even eats some fish just in case any disciples still doubt that he is really risen and that he keeps his promises.

Jesus reassures us in our lockdown that his love and presence is really with us in our homes.

Then he opens their minds. Jesus spends time explaining who he is and how he fits into the whole Bible. He answers their questions, shows them how the world really is and how they

are going to fit into this world. By now it is becoming clear that when they leave their lockdown, there will be a new normal. The world won't be the same as it was before. Jesus has something for them to do in the new normal. He says they are to help everyone to turn from concern with their own lives and instead be concerned with what Jesus wants.

And then Jesus tells them to stay, to wait until they are clothed with the Holy Spirit. The staying now has meaning because he goes on to bless them. Once Jesus leaves, they are still indoors, still in a kind of lockdown but their waiting has been infused with a new meaning and purpose. Their encounter with Jesus has transformed their experience.

We read that the followers go back to worship and were continually worshipping in the temple. They have Christian joy.



What we learn

In our own long lockdown, perhaps we can expect and invite Jesus to come to our houses, and we can spend time reading the Bible, meditating in a Christian way, reflecting on Jesus' life, talk with others Christians about him, talk directly to Jesus and listen, so that we too can look upon him and let him show us and open our minds to who he is.

We can let him reassure us, yet again, that in this world trouble and peace coexist, joy is something we experience not in the absence of trouble, but within it. Joy that comes from his promise that God loves us and because of that all will be well. The rock we can cling to.

And we can turn worry into worship. We can spend time with God allowing him to prepare us for even more clothing in the Holy Spirit so that, whatever the new normal may be, we can be certain that we will be better able to take part in God's mission to bring love and justice to those who don't yet know that God loves them, from our sincere hearts.

The Prayer

Father, stand among us, reassure us, open our minds, bless us and help us to worship you in thought and word and action, deepen us, prepare us, and give us your joy and courage, as long as it takes, during this long lockdown.

Prayers: I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week
- Pray for the nations, their leaders, and peoples pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends
- Pray for the Church

Sunday next before advent: Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

The Notices: If you know of others who'd like to receive this, or you'd rather not receive it; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers