

Salendine Nook Baptist Church
Sunday 24th April 2022

Call to Worship ~ 457MP ~ Make Way, Make Way for Christ the King

Psalm ~150

¹ Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens. ² Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness. ³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, ⁴ praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe, ⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Hymn 1~ 22BPW ~Worship the Lord on the Beauty of Holiness

Prayer of Thanksgiving & confession & The Lord's Prayer

Loving and gracious God, we thank you for the past week. The conversations we have had and the tasks that we have carried out. We thank you that we are able to come to you just as we are, weary, tired and looking for direction. You invite all who are weary to come to you and we will find rest. So, Lord we come to you this morning with all our imperfections and with many faults, but even so you accept us just as we are, and you love us just the same. We thank you that we are able to come before you in the busyness of our day, to worship you, and to offer ourselves in service to you. Help us, Lord to be still in your presence, still our hearts and minds as we prepare to hear your word. Help us to focus on you and follow your example.

We pray for each other that we may know that you are near us and that you are with us always. So, as we come together at this time we do so with an open heart and an open mind. Help us to be active disciples for you. Many times, we hear things, but don't do anything about it. Help us through your strength, power and guidance to fulfil our purpose and work for you in this place. Help us Lord to support one another, encourage each other and not to criticise, to build up and not to knock down. To develop and move forward on our journey of faith together. Help us to build on the past that you have given us in order to prepare for our future together with you.

Lord all that we have been given is given to us by you. So, Lord we bow before you now in humble thanks for all that you have given to us. And as we give thanks, we are also mindful that we have done wrong things and that we have missed opportunities, said unkind things and not been as you would want us to be. So, at this time we come today to say sorry. To say sorry for our wrong doings and our inward-looking ways. Help us Lord to say thank you more often and be gracious to one another. Too often when things are going well, we forget that simple phrase of Thank you. Help us to say it more in love for one another and to you. So, Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ. We ask this prayer in and through you.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn 2 ~ 481BPW ~ I Sing a song of the Saints of God

Notices & Family News

Offering

Hymn 3 ~636BPW ~ O Lord all the world belongs to you

Reading ~ John 20 ~ 19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Purpose of John's Gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection

So, it's strange really when you think about it, the disciples spend the evening of Easter Day behind locked doors. Peter and another disciple have seen the empty tomb and Mary Magdalene has spoken with the risen Christ, and has told the other disciples about it. So, you would have thought they would be out celebrating, announcing to anyone who would listen that Jesus is alive again. Just as he had promised. Yes?! Well, you would think so but as it turns out the answer is NO. We all remember the parable of the lost son? When the son returned a party was held in his honour as the one who was thought to be dead was alive. They were happy, they were overjoyed they had something to celebrate. So, you would have thought the disciples would have been the same. However instead, they hide, but not only did they hide they hid behind locked doors. You see it would appear they were still acting like disciples whose leader is dead. It would seem that instead of being excited and rejoicing they were fearful and afraid.

Because let's face it, protecting themselves makes perfect sense doesn't it. You see it was only a couple days before that they were traumatized by the death of their leader on a cross. But not just their leader, their friend too. They had seen first-hand how Jesus had been treated, they had seen him arrested, tried in a mock trial and executed. So, they were probably fearful that this may happen to them as well. They believed, preached and taught the same message as Jesus so why would they be treated any different to him if they were caught and found. So, as a result, they decided to wait behind locked doors, as quiet as they could be, fearing every footstep on the street below. Which meant, the joy that should have been felt in that place was replaced with fear, a very real fear of what might happen if they were found.

So, whether or not we feel their attitude is justified or not that is what happened. You see it is apparent that fear dominates actions and decision making. We have said it before, but it would appear that the disciples adopt the approach of 'let's just bury our heads in the sand of this situation and hope it will go away!!' Because we all

know that's how it works. That if we ignore a situation, it just magically disappears. Yes? Well of course not, but we have all done it haven't we, ignored a situation which in actual fact just makes it worse. Because remember the disciples were just like you and me, ordinary working people who followed Jesus. And with that thought it puts us and them in the same group as so many other people. Those who are dominated by fear.

The candle at the front reminds us of the fear that people across the world are going through at this moment. The people of Ukraine who are fearful of the future and what will happen next. Most of them don't have a door to lock or a safe place to hide. You see many of the people we see around us every day and even some of us here this morning are frightened and fearful of something, even when we are among people we love and care for. These disciples have plenty of company on the evening of the first Easter Day when fear keeps them inside a locked room. So, it's nothing for us to be ashamed of when we are fearful and want to hide. But we need to remember that people can help and listen and try to understand so we can support one another.

But why is that so? That we should not be ashamed of being fearful. Well, you see it was to his fearful disciples that the risen Christ chooses to appear. He came to them in their fear, doubt and worries and appeared to them just as he does to us. He had passed from life through a gruesome death and returned to a life greater than we can imagine. How awesome, how amazing is that. And it begs the question, Why does he appear to such as these after all they had done to him?

It might have been out of anger, disappointment, or a desire for revenge. As we have said after all, these disciples had deserted him in his hour of need. As he hung for hours on the cross, most of them were nowhere to be seen. So, He might have wanted to start ranting and raving and confront them or give them a steely glare or a piece of his mind and ask them what they were thinking and have it out with them. He could have wanted answers, put them to the test and ask them why after all they had been through together would they leave the one they SAID they loved to endure such a punishment. And that would have been totally understandable wouldn't it.

But as we know nothing of the sort happens. In fact, the total opposite occurred. He actually comes back, not angry or full of self-pity or concern for himself, but instead he is concerned for them. You see He can sense their profound fear. He can tell they are in fear of something or someone. So, he speaks his peace to them. He shows them his wounds, he shows them he is real as his wounds are still apparent on his glorified body. And in that moment, in that instance their fear dissolves. Their friend, their saviour, their master is back with them, and they rejoice to see him alive again.

So, in order to wipe away their fear He gives them his peace which is followed by their mission. He breathes the Holy Spirit on them and tells them to forgive sins with his authority. Over the last few weeks, we have been looking at our mission as individual disciples and as a Church and on that first Easter day evening Jesus returned to his disciples and proved who he was and handed them their mission for him. He wiped away their fear and gave them their mission. And he does that for us today too. The world in which we live is a tough place sometimes and it's not always easy to talk about Jesus and share the good news and proclaim the love that he has for you and me with others. It's not a secret that it's hard, it was never meant to be easy but Jesus will support us on our Journey. He didn't leave his first disciples and he doesn't leave us today either.

This action on that first Easter day set the scene for the future, our future. The action that we see is a second creation, a new beginning, a new hope, a fresh start, an early Pentecost, a commissioning of the disciples for ministry. A commissioning of a new mission, a handing over of the baton for them to continue the work that Jesus had begun. Their business was to be the forgiveness of others in a cruel world, it was to drive the reconciliation of humanity with God and with each other. You see Jesus had given them the prototype, an example for their work by forgiving them, and it was their job to do the same for others. The mission from the upstairs room, was to allow forgiveness to spread like wildfire. To set people free from fear themselves so they are able to help set others free through the love of Jesus Christ.

And this just shows how remarkable Jesus actually is within our lives and within others' lives too that not even death could not hold Jesus? Yes! Is it so remarkable that fear could not hold his disciples too? Yes!

So, the question for us this morning is What's in it for us? What do we get out of all of this? Well, it's the promise of eternal life, and the reality of a reconciliation with God and with other people here and now. Just like the first disciples, we experience Jesus risen from the dead, freeing us from the fear that we face day by day.

But what are these fears we experience in our own lives? Some are announced in the headlines, illnesses for which no cure is known, a weakening economy, wars and rumours of wars. And there are other fears that are more personal, more private to us as individuals too, like a bad medical report, or worrying test results, a broken marriage, a career that crashes, fear of what the future holds. We feel fear when there's no money to pay the mortgage or bills. When our children are struggling, when we see people that we love in a bad place, and we don't know how to help them. When fears flare up in our hearts, and in our mind. It's not easy to find a way to see the positives and it's easy to forget God, and the sacrifice he gave for us to set us free from all our fears, sins and worries.

The disciples you see were no different, they too forgot for a time when they were in the upper room just like we forget too. But you know Christ never forgets us. He comes to us with vivid reminders in his nail pierced feet and hands, with a hole in his side showing us that death, the source of so much fear, has been conquered.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord and we too can rejoice, when in the midst of fear, we recognize Christ here with us. It's not that fear is simply swept away and it just disappears but rather, fear no longer dominates our lives. The empty cross shows us that Jesus is alive and that he has risen from the dead, not just for me or you but for us all.

We are reminded in the passage that this world is made up of many people from many different walks of life all with different thoughts, opinions, joys, fears and worries. It reminds us that people come to faith in many different ways and for many different reasons just like they did then and still do today.

So let us this day shout just as Thomas did when he saw the risen Jesus "My Lord and my God!". Let us shout with Joy and Excitement in our voices as we see for real the wonders he performs in our lives. As we journey together and watch people grow in faith and see the amazing things, he does for us day by day. Jesus returned to earth to promise us our resurrection. He comes back to reconcile us with God and make us instruments for reconciliation in this world. He comes to break the chains of fear that burden our walk with Him. And as we walk with him, we are reminded that we can meet Jesus in many ways, through Scripture and celebrating communion together. We can meet him in the love shown to us by other Christians. We can meet him in the depths of our heart, even at times when we least expect it.

So, Will we make way for the King of Kings? Will we trust him? Will we welcome him in to our lives? Jesus may come to us when we least expect it. Jesus often astonishes us, just as he did those disciples in the upstairs room, and one week later when Thomas saw and he believed. The passage offers us the 3 'F'S' of Fear, Forgiveness and Freedom. We asked earlier what's in it for us? That's what's in it for us Forgiveness and Freedom from our Fears. This Easter season Christ comes to set US free. So, we can truly sing with heart and mind and voice that 'My Chains Fell off, my Heart was free. I rose, went forth, and Followed Him!!'

Let's offer ourselves to Jesus today and put our fears and worries at the foot of the empty cross knowing that Jesus Died, was Buried and Rose again for you and for me and that Jesus is Alive for us in this world today.

Thanks be to God

Amen

Hymn 4 ~328BPW ~ And Can it be.

Prayers of intercession

Heavenly Father, we bring to you our prayers of intercession, our concerns, and our thoughts. We pray for your Church, both here at Salendine Nook and worldwide. We pray for all who attend this church whether that be in person or by reading online. We have been given an opportunity to worship you together wherever we may be, and for that we are truly thankful. Lord, we ask for your blessing on our congregation both near and far.

We pray for the places in the world where difficulties exist. There are many places that get a lot of media coverage, but there are even more that don't. We continue to pray for the Ukraine that the peace talks and the promises that have taken place will become reality and not just a political stunt. We pray for those people who are opening up their homes to the refugees. Jesus was a refugee, help us to support them as they seek to find a safe place to live.

Over the last few weeks, we have donated to local charities, charities that rely on local people. Be with all who serve this community in whatever way. We pray for those who are facing war and famine and ask that we will continue to pray and help in the best way we can. We pray, too, for those who are in power and lead our individual countries. Help them to govern with humility and respect. May all nations work together to live in harmony and peace with one another.

We pray for the Queen who celebrated her 96th Birthday this week and who continues to reign with dignity, loyalty and with a humility to fulfil her promise. We know Lord she finds her strength and guidance in you, help us to do the same.

We pray for our families, friends and neighbours and ask that, we can find ways to continue to support one another and help those who are in need. May we support all those in public life as we continue to pray for all medical staff and those who work on the front line. We pray for those who work in retail and hospitality that they may keep safe and be protected. But Lord we are mindful that some peoples working lives have been affected over the past months, which can lead to other problems. Still their hearts we pray and in doing so we bring before you now Lord all those who are experiencing suffering at this time. For those who are suffering the effects of price rises, and for those who try to offer help. We lift before you now the charities & food banks that are struggling to support the increased number of families who need their help and support.

We pray in particular for the community of Salendine Nook. For the people who live here and for all who are connected in whatever way. We pray for the businesses in the area and their staff, for the Mortons and other sheltered accommodation. May we find new ways to connect and work together. We pray Lord for the School and college and for all the staff and Children, Lord let them know your love for them, help us to engage and encourage them to know you more. We know that we cannot force someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive, but we must never underestimate the power of planting a seed. Help us Lord to plant that seed of your love for each individual so it may have the opportunity to grow through your Love and guidance with our support and encouragement.

Lord you are all we need, so open our Hearts, open our Eyes and open our Ears to Hear you. Help us we pray to commit ourselves to you and to your service this day.

In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen

Hymn 5 ~319BPW The Day thou Gave us Lord is ended.

Blessing ~ 629BPW ~ Let There be peace on Earth