

Worship At Home

18th April 2021



Pause for Thought

Why, or when, might we describe life as like a rollercoaster?

What place do feelings have in your faith?

If/when you are anxious, how do you find peace?

Lord Jesus

Against the noise of the world we cover our ears; at distressing sights we close our eyes; to confusing thoughts we close our minds amid the clamour of distress we close our hearts., All day, every day your ears and eyes are ever open to our needs; help us to worship with open hearts and minds, that we may have open ears and eyes to see the work that you call us to do, and open hands to do it. In the silence of our worship open our eyes, our ears and our hearts to you. **Amen.**

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - ? Be still for the presence of the Lord

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| 1 | Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here;
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear
In him no sin is found. We stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here. | CCLI 620398 |
| 2 | Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned:
How awesome is the sight our radiant king of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around. | |
| 3 | Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace -
No work too hard for him. In faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place. Be still, Be still. | |

<https://youtu.be/Z1MaOxdu6B4>

Let us pray,

Almighty God, reveal Yourself to us as we listen to Your word in Scripture and song, and respond to you in prayer and song. Make Yourself known to us, as we recall the stories of our faith and witness to the faith we have in You. Help us to recognise You in each another in the fellowship we share, in the knowledge that we are not alone.

To the God who is revealed in the stories of the Israelites and the writings of the Scriptures, who cleared the way for the coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ we give you our praise. To the God who is revealed in the manger and upon the cross in the form of a man, who spoke of your love and lived his life according to the precepts of your kingdom to you be all praise. To the God who is revealed in people of faith through the ages, who witnessed to your glory and passed on what they believed to each and every generation we welcome you in our hearts and minds today. Jesus You came to reveal God's

purposes, that we might turn again to that which nurtures and supports, brings peace and security and seeks the good of all. We give thanks and praise to You Lord for coming among us in the past, be with us in the present and be with us in the future. Thank you Lord. As we continue in our Christian journey's we thank you for being with us and for the opportunities you give us. We thank You that you are a just and fair God who takes away our doubts, our fears, our sins and loves us unconditionally. Prompt us in our situations showing us how to love our neighbours, prompt us into actions which mirror Your actions of love and compassion. As we read from Your word, prompt us and move us. **Amen**

Reading: Luke 24:36-48 (Read from verse 16 if you are not familiar with the Emmaus Road journey)

Reflection: "...We'll never walk alone..."

Jesus Christ is often encountered in the most unlikely places at the most unexpected times. He is not only our guide to tomorrow and our ticket to eternity, but our companion on life's road through the wilderness of bewilderment. He is the essential clue necessary to interpret the mystery of life.

Do you ever feel like you are all alone? Does loneliness ever engulf you? Have you ever looked at one of these street scenes from a major city with people walking shoulder to shoulder moving like a river of humanity? All crowded together yet many feeling all alone in the crowd.



A sense of frustration and abandonment prevails in many peoples lives. A gnawing sense of emptiness resulting from a feeling of disappointment is the norm for some. Having been let down dejection is dictated by defeat.

If you are ever described in that manner, you might have been the companion of Cleopas as he walked the lonely road from Jerusalem to Emmaus the afternoon of the reported resurrection of the crucified Christ. Their great expectation regarding Christ had crashed at the cross. Now they were alone and dramatically disappointed in Christ. They needed a resurrection of hope and guidance for the moment. They were DOUBTING what had happened. They were BEWILDERED about what to do. They were FEARFUL of what might happen.

Do you ever experience those emotions? For sure we have felt these emotions in the last year. Note now that the disciples have felt each of these emotions now for over two whole weeks. They couldn't believe that their time with their friend Jesus came to an end first of all in the Garden of Gethsemane with His arrest, they were fearful then for their own lives as Jesus went to the cross and died. They doubted that He was alive again on the Sunday morning after His tomb was found empty. Bewildered and confused they hid themselves and then some returned to what they knew best - finishing. The two followers on the road to Emmaus are also bemused and couldn't believe that the man they were walking with knew nothing of the events which had just taken place. Imagine their conversation...

What did the resurrection mean for Luke? It was not just the miraculous return of a lost leader but the necessary beginning through which God's plan would be fulfilled. It was not the end of the story at all but rather the beginning. Consider how we view the resurrection -does it mean for us?



Traditionally, we've understood the resurrection as Jesus having secured somewhere else for us what to go when we die: heaven. But the resurrection was a cosmic event. Creation in entirety. It's not just about us: in Revelation we hear of a new heaven and a new earth. The same ones - but better. The entire creation. Enhanced. Renewed. Restored. Resurrected.

Resurrection is now, not when we hear the pearly gates clang shut behind us after we have died. It has already begun. Here. Now. Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! In all the messiness of life, we can see glimpses of glory. In pain we can find hope. In desolation, we can find consolation because He is risen. Resurrected. Alive.

Jesus went on to say to his followers, "Everything I told you while I was with you comes to this: All the things written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms have to be fulfilled." He went on to open their minds to the power of the Word of God, showing them how to understand what had taken place. How it is written that the Messiah suffers, rises from the dead on the third day, and a new way of life of sins is proclaimed in his name. He says "You're the first to hear and see it. You're the witnesses". You are my resurrection people. What is our story?



My resurrection story is told on the edge of life, too young to be an adult, too female to be valued, too ill to live, yet he spoke life into my death, ate with me, and gave me breath again. From that edge, I found my centre in life and I live again.

My resurrection story is told on the edge of acceptance, too small to see, too loathed to be included, too distant up that tree to be touched, yet he called me down and spoke, and ate in my house. I was on the edge and it was there, new life was born. I am alive again.



My resurrection story is told on the edge of sin, a line drawn as an invitation for those without sin to cross, and no one did. And he continued to draw, and forgave, and challenged, and invited me back into life, and I took it.

My resurrection story is told on the edge of death, too old to matter, too ill to be cured, twelve years of bleeding, I was never included, loved or remembered, yet I touched him, and he knew. The life I had led, and the life I was born into, he brought back.



How do you answer the question - what is your resurrection story?

Let us pray, Lord God who has called us to faith, in faith we pray for the needs of others. For the world and its people, for our Queen, who has ruled for as long as many of us can remember, and longer than many of us have lived. In her loss and her grief may she find comfort in the companionship of others, support from family and friends, and strength in her faith in God and life eternal. For all of the Royal family in their grief and change of circumstance, some taking up new responsibilities in new ways and with new purpose, and in their support and upholding of each other.

We pray for all who grieve for the loss of loved ones, family or friends, near or far away. Especially those who are bereaved a long way from family who can't travel to be with them to offer comfort and support. In their loss, in their grief, in their solitude may they find a calm centre and be upheld by their faith, their friendship and their neighbours. For those

whose bodies are ravaged by pain and illness, by disfigurement and disability. For those fearful of treatment and those waiting for treatment.

We pray for those of faith and those of no faith, for those with purpose and those with no purpose in life. For those who have a clear direction and those who flounder uncertain for life in all its complexities. For those whose mental health causes them pain, anguish, confusion and loneliness, for those who feel abandoned, unwanted, unloved and un-helped.

For countries at war with other countries and within themselves, for their people who fear for their lives and stability, for those made homeless and jobless and offered nothing but an uncertain future. For those countries where violence comes all too easily to the fore and where it is hard to grasp the real reason behind it. Remembering countries at war where their people are damaged, isolated, abused, for Myanmar, Ethiopia, Mozambique and closer to home for the people of Ireland and Northland Ireland, for Catholics and Protestants, those of faith and those of none. For Christians trying to work out the best way to live out their lives, true to their faith, to the Gospel, to their calling.

For countries with surging Covid cases, for those with poor infrastructure and resources, for countries with little PPE and no vaccines and no realistic prospect of national immunisation any time soon. For those engaged in trying to resolve such issues no matter what faith, colour, creed, it is their need that needs to be met along with providing sufficient food and housing, safety and stability.

For ourselves we pray that our ears may be used to hear the cries of the needy, that our eyes be used to see the needs around us, that our voices be used to speak up for the marginalised and the poor, that our hands be used to reach out in comfort and that our lives be used to improve the lives of others. **Amen.**

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 512 To God be the glory

1 To God be the glory, Great things He has done
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin
And opened the life-gate that all may go in

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord
Let the earth hear His voice
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord*

2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood
To every believer the promise of God
The vilest offender who truly believes
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives

*Let the people rejoice
Come to the Father
Through Jesus the Son
Give Him the glory
Great things He has done*

3 Great things He has taught us, great things He has done
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son
But purer, and higher, and greater will be
Our wonder, our worship, when Jesus we see

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<https://youtu.be/5WmQmL77WKE>

May we go on from here, full of hope and joy. May we go on from here, knowing that through the resurrection, we are forgiven, loved and free. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit go in peace, go in joy, go in love. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week. May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.

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If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you. 4