



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 27th April 2025

compiled by Alison Morgan - Local Preacher

After all the excitement of the Easter activities and all the chocolate eating, we come together to praise our resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ.

Psalm 150 (NIV)

Praise the Lord.

Praise God in his sanctuary;

Praise him in his mighty heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power;

Praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the harp and lyre,

Praise him with tambourine and dancing,

Praise him with the strings and pipe,

Praise him with the clash of cymbals,

Praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord.

Hymn (Mission Praise 109)

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894) & Godfrey Thring (1823-1903)

1] Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne;
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own:
Awake, my soul and sing
Of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy chosen King
Through all eternity.

2] Crown Him the Son of God
Before the worlds began;
And ye who tread where He hath trod,
Crown Him the Son of Man,
Who every grief hath known
That wrings the human breast,
And takes and bears them for His own,
That all in Him may rest.

3] Crown Him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife,
for those He came to save:
His glories now we sing,
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
And lives that death may die.

4] Crown Him the Lord of heaven,
enthroned in worlds above;
crown Him the King to whom is given
the wondrous name of Love:
all hail, Redeemer, hail!
for Thou hast died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity.

Let us pray

Into your presence we come,
God of grace and peace,
Who was, and is, and ever shall be
The eternal one.
In fellowship we come,

Bound together in the love
That died and rose again,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The world would silence your name
But we will not be quiet.
This world would deny your name
But we will speak it out.

God of all beginnings,
Who breathed and this world lived,
Spoke and this world moved,
Loved and brought us to a garden,
A gift of grace providing for our needs.

God of our salvation,
Who chose a people for his own,
Spoke the word of life,
Poured out pure love, and in a garden
Showed the world what love could do.

This world would silence your name
But we will not be quiet
This world would deny your name
But we will speak it out.

You call us to be your voices in this world and we stay silent.
You call us to be your hands in this world and we keep them hidden.
You call us to be your feet in this world and we go our own way.

When we meet someone looking for the way and say nothing, forgive us.
When we meet someone who needs your touch and do nothing, forgive us.
When we are called to take up your cross and carry nothing, forgive us.

Breathe life into these dry bones;
Bring freedom to these lives, that we might declare with heart and soul and voice
That you are our Lord and our God.

For grace we do not deserve, freed, forgiveness for all that is wrong in our lives that keeps us from you,
We thank you.
For life poured out on a cross -
Salvation -
That divine mystery of love by which all might know you as Abba, Father,
We thank you. Amen

Our reading for today is John 20 vs. 19-31

Jesus appears to his disciples

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!'. After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'. And with that he breathed on them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven'.

Jesus appears to Thomas

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 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'.

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'. 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'.

Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'.

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

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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

John is saying "I'll leave you with this". The big finish, the grand finale, the chance to leave a lasting impression, before going out with a bang. Here in John 20 we are reading the final chapter which happens on the day of resurrection. Jesus is grabbing the reader's attention one final time with a line that packs a punch. "Peace be with you"

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

To me the most powerful words in the Bible.

After Mary encounters the risen Jesus in the garden, the disciples are gathered in a room. The whole faith community is there, the men and women (apart from Thomas), together exchanging stories of Jesus, while still fresh in their minds the horrendous death on the cross, which made them feel sick and emotional. The doors are locked, we are told, for fear of the religious authorities. But what have they really got to hold on to? Two people have seen some folded linen in an empty tomb and one of them has embraced a man in a garden who claimed to be Jesus. This evidence is not necessarily reliable because it is based on personal accounts, rather than facts or research. I doubt it would even hold up today in a court of law. Yet there is something compelling about the way the witnesses share what they have seen. Behind locked doors, this community stares at the walls trying to make sense of it all.

Then, Jesus came and stood among them. The disciples' fear dissolves as they recognize him. After they see his hands and his side, they are overjoyed. Here is Jesus, with the community that is just coming into existence and beginning to display signs of future potential. The moment he says, 'Peace be with you, as the Father has sent me, so I send you'. He then breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. This is Jesus' big finish.

Jesus undeterred by crucifixion, unhindered by death and unobstructed by locked doors, could conceivably offer just about anything at this point. His parting gift however is peace and the life-giving breath of the Spirit.

The disciples may have had a sense of déjà vu. Back in John 14, Jesus had promised the coming of the Spirit, offering a peace different from that offered by the world, and Jesus may have wanted to say, "I told you".

The risen Jesus bears the wounds of crucifixion. Only with the marks of suffering can he be recognized as the Jesus they know. Only with the visible signs of trauma in his body can he reach them in the flesh. The peace Jesus offers is totally unlike the types of peace the world offers. It is not like where peace is won through domination and sustained by brute military force. It is unlike the fragile compromised peace arranged or negotiated by Jewish leaders under Roman rule. The peace Jesus offers is not the kind of peace that takes no prisoners, nor the kind of peace offered in exchange for retreat, nor the kind of peace that means being squeezed into a corner, staying

in your lane, or silencing the cry for justice. It is a peace won through love, submission to God's will, and non-violence. It is a peace resting on humility, service and taking the lowest place. It is a peace that blows off the cobwebs, sweeps nothing under the carpet, and speaks in the flesh to those who are afraid and troubled.

When the world's peace ebbs, Jesus's peace flows. When the world's peace is changeable, Jesus' peace is world changing. When the world's peace suffocates, Jesus' peace is breath itself.

The peace Jesus gives comes to those who ultimately recognize him as 'Lord'. As his Spirit-filled people, they are to be the bearers and carriers of his peace. The community are to take the lead as his witnesses. It is as though Jesus is saying, 'I'll leave you with this'.

Later Thomas arrives and we can imagine him saying, 'did I miss anything?'. In the well-known exchange that follows a week later, Jesus begins by offering his peace – a peace that comes through his presence that flourishes by the breath of the Spirit, and which includes those who are not even in the room.

This is the risen Jesus we celebrate in the Easter season. He doesn't say, 'I'll leave you be'. He doesn't say, 'I'll leave you to it'. He says, 'I'll leave you with this'.

Peace be with you.

Hymn (Mission Praise 1072) *Stuart Townend (b.1963)*

1] In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

2] In Christ along – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless Babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones he came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied,
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

3] There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain,
then, bursting forth in glorious day,
up from the grave He rose again!
And as he stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine -
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

4] No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me.
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
no power of hell, no scheme of man
can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Let us say the prayer Jesus taught his disciples:

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, forever and ever. Amen

May the grace of Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Be with us all forever more. Amen