

Sunday 10th May, 2020 (Thank you to Grahame Dixon for today's service)

'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His glorious light.' 1Peter2:9

Hymn: [See what a morning](#) (309 in Singing the Faith)

Let us pray:

Glory to you, Our Lord and our God!

Christ is risen! He is alive and lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God now and forever. We know for ourselves that He lives not only with You but with and in us now. What a glorious morning that was when all the promises of Jesus were fulfilled for us. We are not worthy of such love and action on our behalf. How can we repay You for all You have done for us? We are totally unworthy, failing You and not loving You as we should. Your love and grace are wonderful beyond our understanding. Help us so to follow Jesus and live for Him that we might grow more into His likeness. In His Name we pray. **Amen**

Bible Readings

[1 Peter 2: 2- 10](#)

[John 14: 1- 14](#)

Hymn: [All I once held dear](#) (489 in Singing the Faith)

John 14 is usually read at funerals. When speaking of those who have died this passage is very comforting for those who are left. We have a promise that when we die our souls are whisked off to heaven where we meet and see Jesus in all His glory and we are presented to the Father fully sanctified. Eternal life takes off and our loved one is far better off there than here. It is also good for those of us late in life to be sure of what Jesus has prepared for us.

Although this passage is presented to us in a context of sadness, so much so that it is read at funerals, it is full of hope and life and joy not only for then but now. All that Jesus said and did affected those concerned at that moment. For example water is turned into wine now, Nicodemus can have new life in Jesus now, Lazarus is raised not for then but for now, and so on and into the resurrection stories; Jesus calls us by name now, comforts us by His presence now, gives us His peace now; He is with us in our daily work now. And as we will find at Pentecost He fills us with His Holy Spirit now.

This chapter is part of the farewell discourse of Jesus with His disciples in which He lays out what He is leaving to His disciples. He has no earthly goods at all; the gifts are entirely spiritual. He leaves for them the power to do even greater things than He did. That is remarkable- not when we have passed on but now.

Jesus has just washed the disciples' feet and they have celebrated the Last Supper together. Then Jesus exposed Judas and also Peter and told of His own death. Where would you be after that? What on earth is going on, Jesus?

In the middle of all of this Jesus brings words of comfort. 'Don't worry,' He says, 'Trust God and trust Me. I am going to prepare a place for you so that where I am there you will be. You know the way.' Suddenly some are stirred into taking part.

Thomas is first to be roused. 'Hey, Jesus, we don't know where You are going, how can we know the way?' It's as though he is saying, 'we haven't a clue what you are talking about, how could we possibly know the way?'

Cue one of the great 'I AMs' of Jesus; they have been used to 10 Commandments, ten rules to follow and obey and maybe they are looking for something similar, a way, a truth and a life, some religious rule and they have been travelling with the One who is THE Way, THE Truth and THE life and here He is staring them in the face. Jesus is calling Thomas, not into a religion but a living relationship with Him. This is a relationship that will continue after He is gone and the words of Jesus, 'Wherever I am there you will be

there also' will become true in reverse, 'wherever you are there I will be.'

Jesus was in the here and now; today He is in the here and now wherever in the world His disciple is. Jesus is not confined to Galilee; He is in you right now and all the benefits of His presence are yours now.

Jesus adds the words, 'no-one comes to the Father but by me'. What we can deduce so far as it applies to the here and now is that nobody can know God our Father unless they know Jesus neither can they have the life that Jesus offers apart from Him. Further, nobody can receive forgiveness of sin apart from faith in Him. If you believe in Jesus He lives within you and all the benefits He brings are there for you.

Now, we know that the life Jesus brings us is eternal and all the promises of being with Him in heaven are true for us. But..

This passage draws us into the here and now. The one and only way to know the Father is through faith in Jesus. The life that Jesus brings is only available through faith in Him and we know for certain, without any doubt at all, that the life is eternal life.

Thomas wasn't the only one to struggle with what was going on. Philip wonders why Jesus doesn't just show them the Father. The answer is simple, 'just show us the Father and we are over this'. 'Philip, just open your bleary eyes and look at Me. You are looking at The Father. If you have seen Me you have seen the Father.' That is the reason for Jesus being with us; He has come to show us the full nature of God and to lead us into a full relationship with Him both now and in all eternity.

Those of us left behind by Jesus returning to glory have all the benefits He has bequeathed to us. We know that wherever we are there He is, not just with us but within us. We can know the love and peace of our heavenly Father and have that intimate relationship with our great and mighty God who made everything and is beyond space and time. We call Him 'Abba' because we have seen Him in Jesus. We can know for certain that He is not only with

us whilst we are confined to our homes; He is in us and all the benefits He has given are ours.

W E Sangster said, 'A crown in heaven is no good when I need half a crown now.' Just ask those who are queuing at the food banks waiting for their universal credit. So it is for us.

Life in Jesus is for now! Amen

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for the church throughout the world, especially in this pandemic, that we might be the face and hands and voice of Jesus to all. We pray for all people in the world who need your peace and healing.

We pray for all in authority, for wisdom good leadership and a loving concern.

We pray for carers, health workers and those who serve us today in this crisis.

We pray for our own community here; for all who are fearful and anxious, all who are frail and poorly, all who are coming to the end of life. We pray for those here who are pastors to us and we thank You for them.

We pray for all who have lost loved ones.

We thank You for those who are now with You in heaven who have loved us and blessed us in their time with us. Let Your everlasting peace rest on them.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayers. **Amen**

Lord's Prayer

Hymn: [Teach me to dance](#) (477 in Singing the Faith)

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you

The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious unto you;

The Lord look on you with kindness and give you His peace.

May the blessing of God almighty,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be among us and remain with us always. **Amen**