

East Durham Methodist Circuit:
Online Service for 18th April 2021

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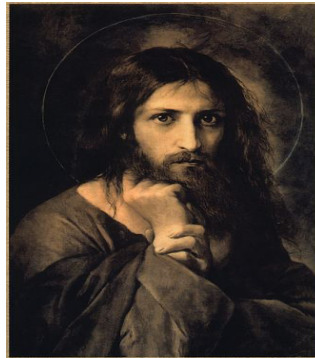
Theme: Let's get building!

Welcome to worship:

Good morning and welcome to our time of worship together and yet separated as we are, we are as one, in unity with our loving Saviour Jesus.

This morning we will be looking at the need to maintain our focus on Jesus, making Him the Cornerstone as we build our lives.

Perhaps this image might help you to concentrate upon Him as our service develops.



A gathering prayer:

Jesus, Jesus Christ, we are looking for something, we are looking for Life
Son of God we know it's true: Jesus, Jesus - we can't live when we're without You

Jesus help us to make you the firm foundation upon which we build our lives. **Amen**

Hymn: **The Church's one Foundation Samuel John Stone **StF 690 / H&P 515****

1. The church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is His new creation
by water and the word:
from heaven He came and sought her
to be His holy bride;
with His own blood He bought her
and for her life He died.

2. Called out from every nation,
yet one through all the earth;
her charter of salvation
one Lord, one faith, one birth:
one holy name she blesses,
and shares one holy food;
as to one hope she presses
with every grace endued.

3. We see her long divided
by heresy and sect;
yet she by God is guided
one people, one elect:
her vigil she is keeping,
her cry goes up, 'How long?'
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the dawn of song.

4. In toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore:
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blessed;
at last the church victorious
shall be the church at rest!

5. Yet she on earth has union
with God the Three-in-One;
and mystic, sweet communion
with those whose rest is won:

O happy ones and holy!
Lord, grant to us your grace,
with them the meek and lowly,
in heaven to see Your face.

Prayers of praise, thanksgiving, adoration and confession:

This prayer is for us all, yet for each of us it is completely personal and it is therefore written as an individual act of worship and devotion:

Lord Jesus Christ, I am in awe that as a result of that Easter Day when You rose from the grave defeating Death and the power of Sin, that You have asked me to follow You.

I am in awe of: Your selfless and all-encompassing love for me.

I am in awe of : Your good gifts to me. In this silence as I name them in my heart, I bring them before you with my deepest thanks.

PAUSE

I am in awe that: You know me completely, my public persona and my hidden being.

I am in awe that: You made me and accept me exactly as I am.

I am in awe that: If I admit them to You, You endlessly forgive all my wrongdoings (Matthew 18 vs 21-22). In this silence I lay all my faults and sins at Your feet.

PAUSE

I am in awe that: All this is mine for free now that You have paid the cost of my wrongdoing through the shedding of Your precious blood on the Cross.

So forgive me Lord that so often I am distracted from the work You have given me to do, so often missing opportunities to share Your Gospel message and help others find Your loving, accepting and forgiving arms, enabling them to find Your saving Grace.

Your love for me is awesome, amazing and personal - and I know that it is mine for the asking as well as being available, in all its fullness, to everyone who acknowledges You as Lord.

Amen

And now let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us:

**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: Reign in Me

Brenton Brown

StF 63

1. Over all the earth you reign on high
Every mountain stream, every sunset
sky
But my one request, Lord my only aim
Is that you'd reign in me again

**Lord reign in me, reign in your power
Over all my dreams, in my darkest
hour
You are the Lord of all I am
So won't you reign in me again**

2. Over every thought, over every word
May my life reflect the beauty of my
Lord
Cause you mean more to me than any
earthly thing
So won't you reign in me again

**Lord reign in me, reign in your power
Over all my dreams, in my darkest
hour
You are the Lord of all I am
So won't you reign in me again**

Reading: Luke 24: 36-48 Jesus appears to His disciples New International Version

Introduction: Last week we looked at Jesus' return to His disciples after the crucifixion as told in John's gospel, focussing on the story of Thomas who had been absent when Jesus first appeared to them.

This week we are looking at Jesus' first re-appearance to the disciples as a group after He had met and walked with two of them on the road to the village of Emmaus earlier on the evening of that first Easter day:

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Hymn: Be the centre

Michael Frye and Kathryn Scott

StF 447

Jesus, be the centre
Be my source, be my light Jesus
Jesus, be the centre
Be my hope, be my song Jesus

**Be the fire in my heart
Be the wind in these sails
Be the reason that I live
Jesus, Jesus**

Jesus, be my vision
Be my path, be my guide, Jesus
Jesus, be my vision
Be my path, be my guide, Jesus

Be the fire in my heart
Be the wind in these sails
Be the reason that I live
Jesus, Jesus

Reading: 1 John 3: 1-7

New International Version

¹ See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Hymn: How deep the Father's love for us

Stuart Townend

1. How deep the Father's love for us?
How vast beyond all measure?
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss?
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life
I know that it is finished

2. Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers

3. I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Reading: Acts 3: 12-19 After the healing of a lame man New International Version

Introduction: Immediately prior to our next reading Peter has healed a man who everyone in Jerusalem knew had been a cripple from birth. It is the first miracle performed by one of Jesus' disciples after they had received the Holy Spirit. It would put them in hot water with the religious authorities... :

¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: 'Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?

¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

¹⁷ 'Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer.

¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Message:

What a week – So much is happening at the moment! We're trying to get our heads around all that is happening. Moving slowly out of what has become the Lockdown norm into a different world that is changing as we speak.

Not having journeyed too far from home for so long, at times we hardly recognize the areas around us. We are overwhelmed with what has, and is, happening. Fearful too as well! There are moments when we are excited and full of energy, but how do we go forward? It feels like we need to start building relationships again with friends and family. Going back to the drawing board and figuring out when and what to do next. A reboot!

Let us for a moment, as C S Lewis suggests, imagine ourselves as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, we can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on.

We knew that those jobs needed doing and so we are not surprised. But then He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and which doesn't seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one we thought of - building a new wing here, an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. We thought we were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.

The Disciples had thought that they had it all; they were with Jesus and everything was really good. Yes, at times He spoke about things they did not understand, but He was with them, so that was okay. And then before they realised it, He was on a cross, then in the tomb. It hurt, it was confusing – so much of what He had said went round and round in their minds. Then three days later – the tomb is empty. And the Risen Jesus starts appearing to them.

They are trying to figure out what their next steps will be as followers of the Risen Christ. They are asking themselves "What's next?" This question was larger than life. It was overwhelming, leaving them paralysed with fear. Trapped in the darkness of the unknown, the future seemed unreal. Then Jesus shares with them the story of Repentance which brings Forgiveness and reminds them that they are witnesses to these events and the next step, once you have experienced Repentance and Forgiveness, is the need to share it with others.

This is what our Acts reading is telling us. Peter and John are on their way to worship and pray, following the example that Jesus had taught them. On that journey, they

respond to the lame man and offer him what Jesus had offered them - and a life is changed!

But Peter does not stop there, he tells them the story. The story of Repentance, Forgiveness, Assurance and Reconciliation and challenges those listening to allow God into their lives, allowing Him to change their houses into a place where He lives and moves, making Jesus the cornerstone – which is part of next week's lesson. It's a story of Hope, a story of Reconciliation, moving from darkness to light. This is not hearsay or a 'grapevine' tale, it is the truth because Peter and John had witnessed it and it had changed them into Children of God.

In 1 John 3, we read that it was not our doing, but the Story of the cross and the empty Tomb, that changes us from a little cottage to a palace. From a sinner into a Child of God, leading us into a life of Eternity with our Father in Heaven.

The Easter events, with Jesus as our cornerstone, builds our lives as we witness what Jesus has done for us because Jesus comes along side us. He offers us an opportunity to REPENT – to turn from our sins and seek FORGIVENESS, which is God's gift to all who call upon the name of Jesus.

And with that we receive the ASSURANCE that our sins are forgiven by the precious blood of Jesus Christ our Lord and we are called home, rebuilding the relationship that was broken due to the sin in our lives. We are made CHILDREN of God.

All we need to do, is live of our lives in the Light of His Glory and Grace.

It's time to surrender to Jesus! Allow our Builder to come and fulfil the plans He has for us.

We were not created to live stagnant lives. To be stuck, bound or broken. We were created with a purpose, a calling, a mandate and a mission.

Even in these uncertain times, that calling remains the same. To go into the world and be His Witnesses. This is the work of Easter. The power of the resurrection in action. What Jesus did has changed us, made us a new creation and given us an unimaginable hope.

So why keep all of that to ourselves? It's time to put Easter in motion! To move out of Lockdown and to make a difference. Sharing Jesus with the world around us.

If our lives have been changed, it's time to get to work. Let's get building!



Prayers of Intercession:

And now it is time for us to bow our heads and bring before You all that troubles us.

We pray for: those people known directly to us. Family and personal friends, our church family, our work colleagues, the people that live around our doors and in the wider neighbourhood, people we pass in the street, in the shops or down the park.

Lord remember these people and all their problems whether through poor physical, mental or spiritual health, through financial issues such as debt or unemployment, or through bereavement, or through worry of caring and the well-being of a loved one.

We pray for: our country and its governance both local and national that it should always be a beacon of hope, truth and freedom upholding Your values in an often hostile world.

We pray for: the whole of Your creation, the billions of organisms that live together on our wonderful blue and green planet Earth. Teach us to understand that every action triggers a reaction, that every choice we make has a consequence, sometimes not seen for years to come. Help us to love our planet, tend it with care. Help us to overcome disease, help us to feed the world, help us to overcome the problems of climate change.

We pray for: our Queen and all the royal family following the death of her husband of 73 years, the Duke of Edinburgh. May her faith in You comfort and uphold her in the days and months ahead.

And finally **we pray for ourselves.** That trusting in You we may be at peace within and move on through our life journey, serving You. **Amen**

Hymn: In Christ Alone

Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

StF 351

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 alone 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

Closing Prayer and Blessing:

I will proclaim the glory of the risen Lord
Who once was slain to reconcile man to God,
Forever You will be the Lamb upon the throne
I'll gladly bow the knee and worship You alone.

Noel and Tricia Richards

And so may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen**