

Traditional Home service Sunday 17th May Easter 6

OPENING PRAYER

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

My God, for love of you I desire to hate and forsake all sins by which I have ever displeased you; and I resolve by the help of your grace to commit them no more; and to avoid all opportunities of sin. Help me to do this, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:
Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*see page 2*)

READINGS - 1 Peter 3:13-22
- John 14:15-21

TALK (*see page 3*)

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

(HOLY COMMUNION) *online only*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*see page 2*)

CONCLUSION

The peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

27 Martin J. Nystrom.
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AS THE DEER pants for the water,
So my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.

*You alone are my strength, my
shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.*

I want You more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye.

You're my Friend and You are my
Brother,
Even though You are a King.
I love You more than any other,
So much more than anything.

377 Charles Wesley.

LOVE DIVINE, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without
ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

Revd Adrian Morton's talk - 17th May
(John 14:15-21 The promise of the Holy Spirit.)

Before this season of lockdown, I was planning to take Teegan to the cinema to see the latest James Bond movie. I like James Bond movies... Action, Fast cars, beautiful women... a global baddie, and Bond wins and saves the world...

If you know Bond movies you will know James Bond always has a secret weapon. Something no-one can see, which he uses when he gets into big trouble. Or when he needs to do something extraordinary...

Well this morning I want to talk about the Christian's secret weapon - the person of the Holy Spirit!

Jesus in this John passage is preparing his disciples for when he is no longer physically with them. And He promises to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of truth. To be with them and us 'forever'!

And He says, about the Spirit, that the world cannot accept him. Because it neither sees him nor knows him.

We are told on the news that many people are currently praying. You may be someone who is praying but you are not sure who you are praying to. Or your prayers just seem to be going nowhere.

There is good news this morning. You can know who you are praying to.

I want to suggest this morning that The Spirit of God is the Christian's secret weapon in life. I realise its not the best analogy... but it'll do for this morning.

The Spirit of God is the Christian's secret weapon. He makes known who we are praying to. The Spirit takes an ordinary Christian life and makes it extraordinary. Actually its the Spirit who gives us real life. Life as it should be 'in Christ'.

In the Message version of that John passage Jesus says to his followers, "you're about to come alive!"

We are meant to live knowing the presence of the Holy Spirit abiding with us and in us. Both as a church community and as individual believers. This is really good news. This is always good news, but particularly in this season of uncertainty & trouble, it is particularly good news!

So in this season, if you are a Christian I want to encourage you to invest in, cultivate your relationship with the Spirit of God.

If you are tuning in and you don't think you are a Christian I want to say something particularly to you at the end of the service.

Different Bible versions translate the word for Spirit in this passage, which is 'Paraclete' as: Comforter, Counsellor, Helper, Advocate, Friend... The word in its more original sense means 'strengtheners'.

Any and all these are good for us!

Jesus is saying that the Spirit is like one summoned to the side of another to befriend them, to advise them, and if necessary to plead their cause. In other words, the Spirit of God is good to have around.

And its a real tragedy that much of the church, throughout history, hasn't given Him a good welcome.

But He's the One who brings life. He is our secret weapon as Christians! This morning I want to briefly outline 3 ways we can position ourselves to experience the Spirit of God more in our lives. Or to cultivate our relationship with Him.

The first way is **Love**..

The Lord's been teaching me more about this over the last few months. I know as a vicar I probably should have got it by

now... for various reasons I'm slow about this... but everything comes down to love.

Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandment, AND I will ask the Father to send another strengthener, helper, advocate etc..." If you love me...

Those who seem to move more powerfully with the Holy Spirit are those who seem to have a real love for Jesus.

So Jesus is the number one priority in life. His kingdom, the things of God are the focus for life. They display a thirst, a hunger to know Him more, to understand His ways. They tend to live as if they have an audience of One... So Jesus is the reason for living, and is the One they are trying to glorify in life.

And Love is the foundation for the Spirit... Lets love Him better!

The second way to cultivate our relationship with the Spirit is this:

To increasingly exercise faith.

The Father has poured out the Spirit. We need to receive Him. In Luke's Gospel Jesus says, 'Ask and you will receive...'

Faith is the key God has given us to access spiritual resources.

Simply, faith, is choosing to believe what God has said is true and living by that. It is not make believe.

Its not creating an imaginary friend.

It is choosing to believe that the Spirit of God has been sent as our strengthener, and He abides with us and He is in us.

I don't know whether you have had these kind of prayer times... you sit down hoping for an amazing spiritual experience, you manage a few lines... chuck out a few seemingly hopeful requests.. And the whole experience is dry, boring, God doesn't seem present and you wonder why you bother... I've had plenty of those times...

I know though, on the occasions that I've made a point to firstly exercise my faith...

So, in other words, I begin my prayer time by acknowledging that the Spirit is present. I acknowledge that He abides with me and is in me. And I thank the Father for providing Him. And I start to dwell on the fact that the Spirit abides with me to strengthen me, to advise me, to plead my cause... All I can say is that on those occasions my prayer time more often than not, is a lot better. I often then start to experience the reality of His presence. Because I have exercised faith...

And its faith that gives us access to spiritual things...

Finally the third way to cultivate our relationship with the Spirit is to know who we are dealing with...

He's the Spirit of Truth....

Yes, that means He reveals the truth of Jesus to us. The truth of Scripture to us..

But we need to know the Spirit operates in the realm of truth. So we have to be honest, raw and real with Him.

We have to be who we really are before Him. With no pretence, no trying to be someone else, no hiding behind a mask of respectability...

He only deals with Truth...

Love, Faith & Truth - 3 ways to position ourselves to experience the Spirit of God...

So I pray that in this season of lockdown, this season of uncertainty, that you will know the One summoned to your side, to strengthen you, to befriend you, to advise you and to plead your cause.

Amen.