

Sunday, 5 May 2024
The Sixth Sunday of Easter
Morning Prayer

Led by Philip Dean, LLM

<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>



Preparation

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

In your resurrection, O Christ,
let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord,
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the deep waters of death
you brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.

Through him dark death has been destroyed
and radiant life is everywhere restored.

As you call us out of darkness into his marvellous light
may our lives reflect his glory and our lips repeat the endless song.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

Hymn – Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

I Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

2 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.

3 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!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Lighting the Easter Candle

Christ yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,
Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever.

Amen.

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

Confession

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

cf I Corinthians 5.7,8

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,
and keep us in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Meditation on the Easter Anthems

- 1 Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us: ♦
so let us celebrate the feast,
- 2 not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness: ♦
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
- 3 Christ once raised from the dead dies no more: ♦
death has no more dominion over him.
- 4 In dying he died to sin once for all: ♦
in living he lives to God.
- 5 See yourselves therefore as dead to sin: ♦
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Corinthians 5.7b, 8

Romans 6.9-11

- 6 Christ has been raised from the dead: ♦
the first fruits of those who sleep.
- 7 For as by man came death: ♦
by man has come also the resurrection of the dead;
- 8 for as in Adam all die: ♦
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

I Corinthians 15:20-22

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Let us meditate on verses 3-5.

The Word of God read by Ann Griffiths

Acts 10: 44-end

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

John 15:9-17

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

¹² 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I

do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Sermon preached by the Reverend Clare Coates

Loving Father, fill us anew with your Holy Spirit. Refresh us, renew us and energise us for the days and weeks ahead. May our walk with you Father, Son and Holy Spirit be blessed by you. Amen.

Over the last few weeks in Hardwick, Dry Drayton, and Caldecote, we have been following the story of the Early Church as it took root and grew rapidly. We get a real sense of the Gospel on the move reaching out across borders from Israel to Judea, Samaria and Africa, and with the Apostle Paul, into Europe. It's clear God's plan for his message of love, hope and salvation is unfolding despite setbacks, vicious persecution, the scattering of his followers, and internal divisions and arguments amongst the believers. Throughout our study of Acts, one very striking thing is revealed: the Holy Spirit is at work in partnership with people to ensure God's message is heard by all. Today we're going to focus on the Holy Spirit and how we too are called to play our part where we find ourselves. God is still at work through His people and His church. He wants us to be involved and to care about the place where He has put us today. So, wherever we find ourselves, this is the place where we can make a difference for Jesus. And the lessons we learn from Acts can help us to live out our faith in our own context.

In our short passage from the Book of Acts this morning, Peter is speaking to a group of people from very different backgrounds. But how did he get here? Let me give you some context. At the beginning of Chapter 10, we meet Cornelius, a Roman Centurion and a devout

man of faith, who revered God and helped those in need. Luke tells us he is visited by an Angel of the Lord who gave him detailed instructions to send men to Joppa to find Peter and bring him back. Cornelius immediately obeys and sends the men off to Joppa. At the same time, Peter has a vision too. But only when Cornelius's men arrive does it become clear to Peter that God is encouraging him to go out of his comfort zone. To set aside his own cultural barriers, rules, regulations and practices. He goes with the men and meets Cornelius and his household and tells them all about Jesus. Peter is not doing all of God's work using his own strength, but the Holy Spirit is working within him as he speaks to the people.

Our passage today begins as Peter is speaking, empowered by the Holy Spirit. As he speaks, the Holy Spirit touches everyone present. It's a really big moment and a totally unexpected one. It caused great astonishment to Peter's travelling companions because they suddenly realised that the Holy Spirit is a gift for everyone. That God is for everyone. This is a simple but very significant moment of truth. It's not complicated! The Holy Spirit eliminates divisions and breaks down barriers between people. The Holy Spirit radically interrupts with an entirely new direction. The question we need to think about is: how do we respond when the Holy Spirit interrupts our well thought out plans with a new direction in life? Are we open to God acting, whether we are ready or not?

The effect on all who witnessed this was immediate. Those accompanying Peter suddenly see with new eyes and capture a new vision of God's kingdom: one that is open to all regardless of their background or status. Cornelius and his household also immediately respond. They received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, praised God joyfully and are baptised in the name of Jesus, becoming his disciples there and then. The nature of the Holy Spirit is unstoppable! Nothing can stand in the way. The powerful lesson from this passage for us today is that the Christian message is one of inclusivity, not exclusivity. That God

welcomes all people to be part of His family, not just one particular group of people.

We also are reminded this morning that we can learn a lot from Peter specifically. Peter was an ordinary fisherman and as a young man never planned to be a preacher or evangelist. It is remarkable that he evolved from a working man to a great religious leader. When Peter was just fishing every day, he probably didn't speak to many people let alone vast crowds. And yet the power of the Holy Spirit totally transformed him. It enabled him to speak out and to teach God's message to all he met so effectively. Like Peter, we too are agents of God. Whatever we do, it's not in our own strength, but draws on God's strength. When we believe in Jesus, like Cornelius, we too receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. It's through the Holy Spirit that we find we find the strength and courage to step out in faith to whatever God is calling us to. So take great encouragement, inspiration and confidence that God is with us and is working with us when we share our faith and the good news about Jesus.

Responsory

Death is swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your sting?

Christ is risen from the dead,
the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

The trumpet will sound
and the dead shall be raised.

Where, O death, is your sting?

We shall not all sleep,
but we shall be changed.

Death is swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your sting?

from I Corinthians 15

Prayers prepared by Rick Nelms

Lord Jesus, we thank you for all that is good in the world and we pray for all people who have needs, whatever and wherever they may be. My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, thank you for our joy in you, for your love and for the light which cannot be overcome. Thank you for the enduring power of your word. Thank you that, just as the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word while Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit still falls upon all who hear the word while ministers, lay and ordained, and those ordinary Christians who minister through their prayers, actions and words, speak today. Thank you that through the cross and the empty tomb and the witness of Mary Magdalene and the women, as well as the Apostles, we know that you were dead and are Risen. Thank you that we are blessed because we have not seen and yet have come to believe.

My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for your universal Church, for all people who believe that you are the Son of God who came not to condemn, but to save, who believe that you are the way, and the truth, and the life and that no-one comes to the Father except through you. We pray that all those who abide in you will understand that what binds us together is your gift, and those things which divide us into cliques and denominations are our inventions. We pray for those who are persecuted for their beliefs, that they may feel blessed and that truly, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. We pray for all of us who are called to do your will. We pray especially for the Ely diocese, for Bishop Dagmar, for all in the Lordsbridge team impacted by interregnum and that your will be done in selecting the next Bishop of Ely as well as in choosing who will minister in the Lordsbridge team.

My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for the world and for an end to the injustice, apartheid and genocide which bring sorrow to so many people. We

pray that the leaders of the nations may hear your word and that the Holy Spirit may fall upon them while the preacher speaks, bringing compassion, honesty and integrity in place of what is so often selfishness, indifference, ruthlessness and corruption. We pray that all elections are free and fair. We pray for everyone affected by natural disasters, and that those who bring aid will be empowering, facilitating people's resilience against future disasters. We pray for everyone impacted by the conflicts in eastern Europe and the Holy Land as well as the many conflicts ignored by the media. May aid workers, innocent civilians and seafarers know your love and protection and may peacemakers be truly blessed.

My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for the beautiful creation which was made and is sustained through you, and which Father God called "very good". We pray for an end to unsustainable materialism, selfishly consuming the resources of this vulnerable biosphere as though they were infinite. We pray for robust environmental protection, an inconvenience so easily set aside, corruptly justified with evasive answers and outright lies. We pray for the sustainable sharing of resources so that everyone has what they need, in the certain knowledge that there is enough because you came so that we all might have life and have it abundantly. My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for our communities, for our families, friends and neighbours including the neighbours we do not know. We pray for those trapped in poverty or in loveless or abusive relationships, for prisoners and captives, that they might hear your word and the truth that will set them free. We pray for all those who make our communities function through their work, whether it be paid or voluntary, formal or informal. We pray for an end to decisions made solely to bring more wealth to those already rich, instead, such decisions being made for the benefit of everyone in our communities, bringing better public transport, better roads and drainage, better healthcare, better education and truly affordable housing for all.

My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for all people who suffer. We pray for those lost in what they believe to be a godless darkness, living in fear of death, that they may find your hope and light, and come to faith through your resurrection. We pray for those struggling with all kinds of mental distress, and for everyone who is physically ill, injured or recovering from treatment, living with pain, fatigue and frailty, that through your love, grace and peace, they will find comfort in prayer and faith. We pray for people who are bereaved, lonely, cold, hungry, frightened, homeless or migrating in the hope of a better future. May your living Word and the open, welcoming arms of your people, bring comfort and healing to all those in need.

My Lord and my God, in your mercy, **hear us.**

Lord Jesus, through your death and resurrection, and through your promised Holy Spirit, you have made us one with your believers in heaven and on earth: grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may ever be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer and know ourselves surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy.

My Lord and my God, **Risen Lord Jesus Christ, in your mercy, hear us, and make us one in heart and mind to serve you with love for one another and with joy for ever. Alleluia, Amen.**

The Collect

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in God's new creation,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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 – Come People of the Risen King

1 Come, people of the risen King,
who delight to bring him praise;
come, all and tune your hearts to sing
to the morning star of grace.
From the shifting shadows of the earth
we will lift our eyes to him,
where steady arms of mercy reach
to gather children in.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O church of Christ, rejoice!

2 Come, those whose joy is morning sun,
and those weeping through the night;
come, those who tell of battles won,
and those struggling in the fight.
For his perfect love will never change,
and his mercies never cease,
but follow us through all our days
with the certain hope of peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O church of Christ, rejoice!

3 Come, young and old from every land –
men and women of the faith.
come, those with full or empty hands –
find the riches of his grace.
Over all the world, his people sing –
shore to shore we hear them call
the truth that cries through every age
‘Our God is all in all’!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O church of Christ, rejoice!

Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend
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Notices

The Conclusion

Lord God,
you feed us with the living bread from heaven;
renew our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love.
Teach us to hunger for Christ who is the true and living bread,
and to live by every word that comes from your mouth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst us, and remain with us always.
Amen.

May the risen Christ grant us the joys of eternal life.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.