

Sunday 11th April 2021 – Bulwell United Reformed Church

Today's worship for the first Sunday after Easter is based on Jesus appearing to the Disciples and Thomas after the Resurrection

A gathering prayer

We are the people of God.
Risen Lord, as we gather today,
may we see you and hear you,
may we feel you and touch you,
may we know your presence with us now.
Amen.



A prayer of confession

Prince of peace, we are sorry
that we choose not to forgive but to hold grudges;
that we doubt you and do not trust;
that we choose to rely on our own resources and not on you;
that we believe only when we have proof.
Help us to forgive more readily, and to trust more willingly.
Amen.

Declaration of Grace / Absolution

In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus has commissioned us
to announce the forgiveness of sins.
You who have put your faith in Jesus the Messiah
will receive the outcome of your faith,
mercy for your sins and resurrection life in Christ.

Sisters and Brothers,
.....your sins are forgiven;
.....be at peace.

Our Father

Song See what a morning - Stuart Townend & Keith Getty lyrics and pictures

[\(446\) See what a morning - Stuart Townend & Keith Getty \(lyrics and pictures\) - YouTube](#)

John 20:19-31 - Jesus appears to his disciples

¹⁹ 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!' ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

Jesus appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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.'

²⁶ 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!'

²⁷ 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.'

²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

²⁹ 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

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ 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. (NIVUK)

Meditation – I wanted to know that's all (Thomas, John 20: 19-31)

I wanted to know that's all, to see for myself if it could possibly be true – was that so awful?

Remember we'd *all* doubted at first, when the women came back that morning, dismissing their story of the empty tomb as so much nonsense, so why point the finger at me, as though *I* questioned but *they* didn't?

All right, the situation had changed since then, I accept that, for they all claimed to have seen him in the meantime, and not just them others, each adamant the Lord had risen, yet as much as I wanted to believe it I couldn't, not unless the proof was spelt out for me in black and white.

That was me all over, I'm afraid, the way I'd been since a boy, struggling to accept anything I couldn't touch for myself or see with my own eyes, and I'd said as much to Jesus before he died, that day he spoke about his Father's house, and his going to prepare a place for us. 'Believe in God,' he'd said, 'believe also in me.'

A wonderful promise, yes, only to me he was talking in riddles, and I made no bones about it: 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' He wasn't angry with me, though he could have been, for after all that time, all he'd said, I should have known, just as I should have understood he would rise from the tomb and return among us.

He'd spoken of it, often enough, done his best to prepare us not simply for his death but his resurrection to follow, but, as so often happens, we dwelt on the bad and forgot the good, unable to see beyond the demands of the present moment.

So despite it all I refused to believe, convinced there were still too many questions and not enough answers. And I'd still be doing that still, still wondering if it could ever be, but for his grace.

For suddenly he was there again, standing among us, arms outstretched in welcome, those pierced hands reaching out to me Thomas, and I'd knew I'd been wrong – he was alive, just as they'd said, risen and victorious – and I knelt in worship, my heart overflowing with thanksgiving, for he'd come, despite me, despite my lack of faith though I had doubted him, still he believed in me!
(Nick Fawcett from No Ordinary Man, Book 2)

Prayers of intercession

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the places in the world that need your peace:
places where wars continue to threaten the stability of the nations;
and the lack of peace has caused so much destruction;
places where people have to flee their homes, their families destroyed, lives lost.
Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

Give wisdom to world leaders:
to presidents, prime ministers, politicians of all governments,
that they may strive for lasting peace and true justice,
not putting personal ambitions before the needs of their people.
Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

We pray for those who need peace of mind:
those weighed down by the stresses and strains of everyday life,
or who suffer with anxiety, or are oppressed by worry and fear;
for those who find it hard to let go of things and simply trust.
Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding. Amen.

Please add your prayers for others you wish to pray for today . . .

Hymn To God be the glory (Stuart Townend)

[\(446\) To God Be The Glory Lyrics - YouTube](#)

Thanksgiving John 20: 19-31 – Jesus & Thomas

We give you all thanks and praise, O God,
for you have raised Jesus Christ from the dead
and by your grace we have life in his name.

You sent your Word of Life into the world,
in your Son, Jesus,
shining your light into our darkness,
that the sins of the world might be forgiven.
Though he was killed by those who walk in darkness,
you raised him to resurrection life
and now he lives at your side for ever,
advocating mercy for all who stumble into sin.
Through his great grace
we are able to live in fellowship with you
and in peace with one another,
in one heart and mind.



***Therefore, with our hearts lifted high,
we offer you thanks and praise at all times
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.***

The Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Wine

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup saying 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

The Sharing of the Bread and the Wine

*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Alleluia.*

Take, eat; this is the body of Christ, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, shed for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sin. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of him.

Prayer after Communion

God of a love stronger than death, you have given us new birth into a living hope through the gift of your Son.

God with us, you have fed us with yourself and strengthened us for journeying ahead.

God of truth and power, you take our weakness and our sin and refashion us by grace.

Benediction

Lord, thank you that in your presence is fullness of joy,
that in you we find life.

You lead us throughout our lives, always beside us, always faithful to us.

Go before us now, and may we bring joy to our world.

Amen.

