

Central Hall 26th April, 2020

Call to Worship: Alleluia, the Lord is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!

Hymn 297 Christ is alive

Prayer Loving God, we praise and we thank you for all you have done in Jesus, for your victory through him over sin and death. We praise you that your love overrides all things and we can never be separated from it.

When life seems hard, when we feel despondent and alone, assure us Lord of your love and your peace that passes all understanding.

Lord we praise and adore you our risen Lord and Saviour.
Amen.

Hymn 293 All heaven declares

Reading Luke 24 vs.13-35

Thoughts

Things are not always what they seem are they!

While holidaying in Gran Canaria we thought we would cook omelettes for our tea and so bought some eggs from the local supermarket. We prepared all that was needed for the meal and I went to crack the eggs into a bowl. Strange, I thought, as I tapped the egg: it's solid inside! That is not how it is supposed to be! I discovered to my surprise that the eggs were hardboiled and not raw. I hadn't expected this but if I have learned Spanish I would have known when I read the label on the box and we wouldn't have ended up having hard boiled eggs and salad for tea. As I say, things aren't always what you expect!

Things were not quite as expected for the two on the road to Emmaus. So imagine you are on that road feeling grief and despondency after seeing Jesus tried and crucified, and then hearing from others that the tomb was empty and that Jesus is alive. Surely this isn't true, you say; it can't really be possible! Nobody has really seen him! But then this stranger comes alongside wanting to know what has happened and you are absolutely amazed that this event has passed him by. How could anyone have missed the events of these past few days? And it is not until Jesus breaks bread that you recognise who he is. Jesus has been walking with you, talking with you all along. Yet, because you are so caught up with your own feelings; walking with eyes down and a heart full of sadness, you simply can't take on board the reality that it was Jesus walking with you.

It was only in the breaking of the bread that the penny dropped. Only then did you realise that it all felt so different when the stranger was walking with you.

Different when you realised the stranger was Jesus. Different because Jesus really was alive!

We can then be so overwhelmed by circumstances that we fail to recognise that Jesus is alive and walking alongside us in the everyday of our lives. That his love never fails and he is there, ready to bring peace into our lives. We are going through very unusual times, we can feel isolated and alone, we can feel angry and frightened but in all these things Jesus walks with us, loving and caring for us. For nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus.

Reflection from Eddie Askew

*Forgive me, Lord,
for all the times I walk through life head down,
my vision limited to the immediate.
Confined within the pressures of my day, problems press in, expand, prevent the
recognition that we both desire.
I find it hard to look beyond the obvious, my mind so sealed it almost breaks
imagination's fingernails to prise it open to the wonder of your presence.*

*Yet still you walk with me, each step a revelation of your love,
a gentle leading on to boundaries of understanding I've not yet crossed.
Have patience, Lord,
help me to see your hand at work shaping, my life,
and make your nearness a delight that turns my mourning into joy.*

Hymn 303 I know that my Redeemer lives

Prayers for Others

Pray for those who are suffering due to Coronavirus or in other ways.

Pray for those working in the NHS and all the service industries.

Pray for the church separated physically yet together in Christ.

Pray for families who are parted from loved ones

Pray for yourself.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 313 Thine be the Glory

Blessing May the risen Lord Jesus be with; walk with you; and bless you
today and always. Amen.