



Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit
With God in the City, Towns, Villages and rural areas

EASTER 2023

Worship at Home with Revd. Gareth Baron

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

**StF n°298 Christ the Lord is risen today;
Alleluia!**

Christ the Lord is risen today;
Alleluia!

All creation joins to say:
Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high;
Alleluia!

Sing, you heavens; let earth, reply:
Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done,
Alleluia!

Fought the fight, the battle won;
Alleluia!

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
Alleluia!

Christ has burst the gates of hell:
Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King;
Alleluia!

Where, O death, is now your sting?
Alleluia!

Once he died our souls to save;
Alleluia!

Where's your victory, boasting grave?
Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led,
Alleluia!

Following our exalted Head;
Alleluia!

Made like him, like him we rise;
Alleluia!

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies:
Alleluia!

King of Glory! Soul of bliss!

Alleluia!

Everlasting life is this,

Alleluia!

You to know, your power to prove,

Alleluia!

Thus to sing, and thus to love:

Alleluia!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray...

God who made the Sun which rises in the sky, burning gloriously bright and giving light to the earth. Shine your light into my heart and life today.

God who conquered the grave and rose in victory defeating the power of death. Shine your light into my heart and life today.

God who offers forgiveness and new life through Jesus our Redeemer. Shine your light into my heart and life today.

God who knows and loves us completely, lead us in our worship each new day. Shine your light into my heart and life today.

Amen.

StF n°303 I know that my Redeemer lives –

I know that my Redeemer lives --
what joy the blest assurance gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
he lives, my everlasting Head!

He lives, to bless me with his love;
he lives, to plead for me above;
he lives, my hungry soul to feed;
he lives, to help in time of need.

He lives, and grants me daily breath;
he lives, and I shall conquer death;
he lives, my mansion to prepare;
he lives, to lead me safely there.

He lives, all glory to his name;
he lives, my Saviour, still the same;
what joy the blest assurance gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives!

Samuel Medley (1738-1799)

Let us pray...

All Loving God, abounding in grace and mercy.

For the times we haven't lived like people who know that our Redeemer lives.

Forgive us and lead us in new life with you.

For the times we have not loved you with all our heart, our mind, our soul, our strength.

Forgive us and lead us in new life with you.

For the times we have not loved our neighbour and turned from those in need.

Forgive us and lead us in new life with you.

For the times we have been unwilling to wash the feet of others, letting pride prevail.

Forgive us and lead us in new life with you.

For all that denies your Redeeming life within us.

Forgive us and lead us in new life with you.

May God who knows the repentance of our hearts, forgive us our sins. Amen.

John 20: 1-18 **The Resurrection of Jesus**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflection

Jesus is alive, "why are you weeping?"

John's account of the resurrection of Jesus is tremendous for some many reasons, not least the vivid picture it paints. We have running disciples, responding with urgency to the discovery and news of a removed tomb stone. We have desperate investigations and divine discoveries.

In the Gospel account of Matthew, we read that following the heinous events and crucifixion of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, witnessed Jesus' body being placed in the tomb and closed with a stone. The Sabbath was pending and what was a day of preparation had ended in unimaginable terror, anguish and fear. I often wonder of that day; it must have felt like the longest of days. But what depth of emotional despair, sadness and distress was known?

Cue the break of day on the first day of the week. One can only imagine the overwhelming grief fuelled yearning and desperate pull of attending the tomb in very heavy mourning. The scene of Jesus' dead body being laid in the tomb and the sealed with the stone engraved in her mind throughout that Sabbath day and then to find the tomb disturbed with the stone removed, can only have added to this emotional roller-coaster.

Why are you weeping? This question asked first by two angels which seemingly is no big deal for John as the account of Mary's encounter with these two angels reads like that of any other dialogue. I mean were angelic encounters that common place that Mary wasn't phased by meeting them and John didn't burst with excitement.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told; 'Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.' In Mary's encounter, she must have known they were angels, even if it was after the event, otherwise how do we have it recorded.

But what of their question. In the context of someone weeping at a grave, at a tomb, it would seem obvious why someone might be weeping. Yet, if you know someone is weeping for someone that they believe to be dead but who is alive, their question isn't asked with any insensitivity. Instead, the question becomes an announcement that Jesus is alive. Mary's exchange with the angels is interrupted as she is met by Jesus that she mistakes for the gardener.

Jesus asks the same question as the angels, but pushes Mary further, revealing that he knows she is looking for someone, but still Mary pleads to know what has happened to Jesus' body. Jesus addresses Mary by name, and Mary recognises him, and calls out Rabbouni! Teacher!

We are not told if Mary's weeping continued, tears turned from sorrow to joy. We are not told if Mary's runs to find the disciples when she goes to announce, 'I have seen the Lord' and what Jesus had told her. We are told of what Jesus said, that He is ascending to God Our

Father, which as we know saw the promise of God Holy Spirit come at Pentecost.

A supernumerary Minister once described to me how they thought of tears as liquid love. Mary was asked twice the question, 'why are you weeping?' First by the angels, then by Jesus. Both times her answer revealed she was looking for the body of her Lord. But was that why she was weeping? I'd suggest it was because she loved Jesus.

When Mary returned to the tomb following the Sabbath, she didn't know Jesus is alive. When Mary looked into the tomb and saw the two angels in white, she didn't know Jesus is alive. When Mary was met by Jesus and mistook him for the gardener, she didn't know Jesus is alive. Why would she? Mary unknowingly was searching for the living among the dead. However, upon leaving the tomb Mary knew Jesus is alive.

So, what does this mean for us today? In short, everything.

Jesus is alive, and as Peter preached, in our repenting; in our turning to God and our baptism in the name of Jesus Christ our sins may be forgiven. Jesus is alive and his promise of receiving the Holy Spirit stands true today. We celebrate Jesus is alive in the power of the Risen Lord Jesus, Messiah. What's more, we share in the victory and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour.

In Methodism we have the four All's. "All need to be saved. All may be saved; All may know themselves saved. All may be saved to the uttermost." No-one is beyond the reach of God's love and salvation is there for everyone who turns to God because Jesus is alive.

Jesus is alive, the tomb is empty and just as Jesus called Mary by name, Jesus calls you by name. Will you recognise Jesus in your life, will you be open to God's love and salvation.

Let us pray... Dear Jesus, help us to recognise you in the surprising and ordinary places of life. Heavenly Father, help us to live obediently within your loving embrace. Holy Spirit, equip us to run with you all our days. Amen.

StF n°313 Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son.

¹Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where thy body lay:

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won.*

²Lo, Jesus meets us,
risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us,
scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth,
death hath lost its sting:

³No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught without thee:
aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above:

Edmond Budry (1854-1932)
translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875-1939)

Prayers for others.

Loving God,

We weep with those who weep in the world.
We cry out to you, Our Risen Lord and
Saviour, seeking in Your mercy to hear our
prayers.

We pray for those living in places war; conflict
and cultures of violence.

We pray for those living with illness, anxiety
and distress.

We pray for those living in poverty.

We pray for those living with the sadness of
lost and bereavement.

May all know the love of God meet them
according to their needs. May help come in
friend and stranger by the inspiration of the
Holy Spirit.

We ask these prayers in the Name of Jesus,
the Champion of our faith. Amen.

StF n°316 When Easter to the dark world came.

¹When Easter to the dark world came,
fair flowers glowed like scarlet flame:
*at Eastertide, at Eastertide,
O glad was the world at Eastertide.*

²When Mary in the garden walked,
and with her risen Master talked:

³When John and Peter in their gloom
met angels at the empty tomb:

⁴When ten disciples met in fear,
then 'Peace' said Jesus, 'I am here.'

⁵When Thomas' heart was hurt and grieved,
then Jesus' wounds his doubt relieved:

⁶And friend to friend in wonder said:
'The Lord is risen from the dead!'

⁷This Eastertide with joyful voice
we'll sing: 'The Lord is King! Rejoice!'
*At Eastertide, at Eastertide,
O sing, all the world, for Eastertide.*

W. H. Hamilton (1886-1958)
Words: ©Oxford University Press.

Easter Blessing

May Jesus in His victory, who welcomes all
into new life in His kingdom, continue to
liberate all from the power of sin and the
oppression of darkness.

May the Holy Spirit keep us and teach us how
to walk with Jesus in His Risen life.

May the Love of God our heavenly Father be
the focus and source of all we think, speak
and act.

Go in peace to love and serve our Risen
Lord. Alleluia!