

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

29 March 2020

Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.'

Application. We are now rapidly approaching Easter, but before we get there we commemorate the events of Holy Week; from the palm-strewn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, through the Last Supper, to the place of his torment and crucifixion, right through to the miracle of the empty tomb. As Lent comes to an end, think about how knowing the conclusion of the story help us to understand the events as they unfold; how does understanding the resurrection of Jesus and the truth that death is not the end help us live with the realities of our lives today?

TIME OF PRAYER

There are lots of ideas for prayer in 7/52. Pray for the friends you won't be seeing today. Ask God to fill you with his Spirit so that you can be good news whatever this week has in store.

SUGGESTED SONG

To You O Lord (Kendrick & Redman)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1eKkl4EeQM>

BLESSING

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

You can find this document and this week's 7/52 online at the above web address which I have called Sunday Supplement! If you look at this Sunday Service sheet on your computer or device you should be able to highlight and click on the links and go straight to the songs, readings, or websites. The direct links will also be on this Sunday's page on the <https://rydebaptist.xyz> website.

YOUR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

I've had a bit more time this week to put this sheet together. However, I'm still sure that there are improvements that can be made with your help and assistance. Please let me have all your ideas and suggestions by Monday evening at the latest, and we'll see what develops over successive weeks. I already have several ideas of how those of us with computers (that have cameras and microphones) can join together for prayer and Bible study...

PRAYER MEETING INVITATION

Last Monday evening we held a really successful prayer meeting using online conference software called Zoom. Tomorrow evening at 7.30pm we shall meet again. You will receive an email either later today or on Monday inviting you to join us. Click on the link in the email a few minutes before the meeting starts, to allow time to log in. If it works well with a much larger number, it may mean that we can use this to meet together again on a Sunday morning too!

Dear Friends,

Good morning! The very first thing I want to say today is to offer my most profound thanks for the way that you have all responded over the last week. I have never had so many phone conversations in the course of one week in my entire life. On a couple of days it seemed like I was on the phone for the entire day. For the way we are keeping in contact with each other and being there for each other is really encouraging. For those who have phoned me to check that I am doing OK, a big thank you too. One thing I am very conscious of, though, is that this is just the start. We have many weeks to go. So we will be regularly checking that what we have put in place really works and is sustainable—so that no one feels that they aren't just a phone call away from someone else to have a chat with or to encourage one another.

You will have received these Sunday Service notes by email or through the door. Don't forget, if you are able to access it, that there is a website which contains all the links to the songs and readings and other resources, and I am planning a couple of other surprises on there too: <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

CALL TO WORSHIP

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; ² Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. ³ If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. (Psalm 130:1-4)

Let us enter into worship this morning humbly, confessing our sin, yes, but all the more confessing our faith in the Lord who is merciful and forgiving. Let us simply in prayer confess our sin and receive the forgiveness he freely offers.

There is a lot of fear and anxiety around at the moment, understandably. There are lots of 'depth cries' of anguish. When those cries are to the Lord, he hears and responds in his deep mercy and everlasting love. The mercy of God leads to real acts of service through our heads, our hands and our hearts.

PRAYER

Thank you Lord for your love, forgiving our sin and showing your generous mercy to all; calming our fears and filling our hearts with unquenchable hope.

BIBLE READINGS

[Psalm 130](#)

[Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)

[John 11:1-45](#)

[Romans 8:6-11](#)

TO PONDER

All of us have had dreams, I am sure, that have been very surreal—a bit like a painting by Salvador Dali; and I am equally sure that most of us wouldn't want our dreams to be published and still less be read many hundreds of years later. Whatever the circumstances of Ezekiel's vision, he was certain that it was no mere dream but the Lord who was guiding him through a new learning experience.

When we see a pile of bones we are sure that all life has not just expired but gone forever. Lifeless. And the people of God had strayed so far from him that all spiritual life had been effectively extinguished. Israel and its covenant with God to be a light to all nations was so much a distant memory, the light might as well have been extinguished. Israel was as good as a bag of old bones.

Yet all is not lost. Things around us might appear to be as good as dead. But, where might God be wanting to breath new life into our community, our church, even into our own personal life? Ask God to show you now.

SUGGESTED SONG

In Christ Alone (Stuart Townend)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWiFYJMGas0>

TIME OF PRAYER

Remember where and when God has been with you this week. Thank him for his faithfulness, whether we sense his presence or whether we feel distant.

Mull over the words of the Ezekiel passage and/or Psalm 130 and let your imagination wander into prayer. Do we believe his promises, that his love will not fail us and that he will put a new Spirit within us.

Acknowledge that God has called you for a purpose and wants to use you and your gifts and abilities to serve him, wherever you are and whatever you do.

SUGGESTED SONG

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

(Chris Rice) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjfToqk5w5g>

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction. We sometimes use the word dead to mean something less than dead. 'She was dead to the world,' we might say, meaning that she was asleep; 'He was dead behind the eyes,' might mean that he was spaced out or not with us. Ironically when Jesus says that Lazarus has fallen asleep he actually means that he has died, that he is dead!

Bible. When Jesus first receives the news about his friend Lazarus, it is simply that he is ill. His sisters Mary and Martha are keen that Jesus come to him. Yet Jesus says his illness will not end in death. Which is strange because Lazarus does die, and Jesus delays getting up and going to Bethany until after he has been in his tomb for four days. Until he explained fully the disciples thought Lazarus was just asleep and could be woken up. But as becomes apparent, he was very dead indeed. It is important that he was dead for Jesus to say to Martha, 'Your brother will rise again.' She replies, in faith, that she knows he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Which leads to the powerful revelation from Jesus, familiar words to us as they are part of most Christian funerals we have ever been to, who says, 'I am the resurrection and that life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.' Jesus follows this by asking Martha, 'Do you believe this?' Martha's, Mary's, and the faith of all who witnessed what then happened next was transformed by the time that the story reached its climax as Lazarus wakes up.

Reflection. Jesus asked Martha a very important question. What about you? Do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Do you know that if you believe in him you will never die, that death is not the end?

Application. In last week's 7/52 there was a very helpful list of ways we could help during the coronavirus pandemic. The last suggestion was that we should 'Be good news'. Good news—that is what the word 'gospel' means. It then went on to say, 'We have good news to tell. The God who made us and died for us, cares about us and invites us into eternal relationship with him. There is more to life than food, work and sleep. Death is not the end. It is more important than ever that Christians are good news people when there is so much bad news all around us.' That is the truth, that is what we believe, but it only becomes real in our lives and the lives of others when we put it into practice. This is very important right now.

Bible. Humanly speaking no one really expects the dead to live again, and the only permanent example that we know of is Jesus himself. Yet Ezekiel witnessed the bones coming together and being covered in flesh, and the winds of the Spirit breathing life into them again. The witnesses at Lazarus's tomb likewise saw the decaying corpse of the dead man, now fully alive, come out of his burial place. So much so that 'many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.' Those who believe in Jesus live in the realm of the Spirit, as Paul says in Romans 8:9. We live in the age of the risen reigning Lord Jesus, so as Paul continues, 'if the Spirit of him who raised