

# RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

## 19 April 2020

ships, and so on. If Jesus is risen from the dead, then everything else changes!

**Evidence.** Jesus didn't need to give Thomas the signs that he wanted, although it seems that this is more about meeting a need—and in the retelling of the story down through the millennia it certainly helps to satisfy the needs that we have. Thomas was in the room. We are not. As literary devices go, Thomas's story is a good one for he represents all who follow thereafter. We take the part of the one who previously said to Jesus, 'Lord, I do believe; help me to overcome my unbelief.' (Mark 9:24) That help is forthcoming for Thomas and us as Jesus says, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' Thomas acts on our behalf gathering the evidence for us. Thomas's confession, 'My Lord and my God', allows our confession to follow. Thomas is blessed, and it follows that we too can be blessed: 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

**Inheritance.** There is an awesome phrase in Peter's letter that describes all that flows from the resurrection as 'an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.' When Lazarus was raised he eventually died again. Only Jesus is risen and is risen forever. Our life and hope in Jesus can never die, never rot, never decompose. The resurrection of

Jesus means that for us life is without end. John reminds us that we are told these stories 'that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.' The Greek original is literally 'that you may go on believing'—the continual present—so, the resurrection of Jesus sustains eternal life, faith, and hope that continues for ever. The kids from 'FAME' (the 1980s TV show) sang, 'I'm gunna live for ever, I'm gunna learn how to fly'! You don't have to go around singing that, but now is a good time to take hold of and live life to the full.

### EPILOGUE

<sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:8-9)

### SUGGESTED SONG

Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9nwe9\\_xzw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9nwe9_xzw)

### 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>

### Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Dear Friends,

Well that was a very different Easter from any that we have previously celebrated. I am sure that I am not the only one amongst us to be grateful for those who have been in touch and sent Easter greetings in one form or another. It was also very encouraging to see so many of us joining in for our online Zoom meetings over last weekend: there were a good number for Maundy Thursday Communion and Easter Morning Breakfast, and twenty of us for our Good Friday Coffee Morning—and you even had to provide your own coffee and hot cross buns! It has taken a while, but hopefully by now most of us are getting used to the 'new' technology.

For the first disciples literally everything changed at Easter. From the build-up as Jesus entered into Jerusalem only a week earlier, to the events leading up to the Last Supper and Jesus' Crucifixion and then his Resurrection on the third day. It seems from reading the accounts in the gospels that things went very quickly indeed, with hardly a moment to stop and think, and to take things in. Yet the disciples did remember so many of

the details that we find recorded in the gospels. It is encouraging that John tells us 'Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.' There is something reassuring that there is room for all our questions and our doubts; that we are given the information we need rather than the information we sometimes want. Things will never be the same again for them, and that is also true for us. Change becomes the new normal. There is a new online drama on the life of Jesus and his disciples called 'The Chosen' which as part of its advertising uses the phrase 'Get used to different'. What a great way to emphasise the difference that following Jesus makes. We need to get used to it.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

<sup>3</sup>Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. (1 Peter 1:3-4)

We often hear that 'seeing is believing', but this is not always necessarily true. Praise the Lord that the faith we have,

the living hope we live by, is not due to anything that we have seen with our physical eyes, or experienced in the usual ways that as human beings we experience things. Neither does our faith depend on the many witnesses to the events, many of whom are recorded in the New Testament. Our faith, our hope, indeed the very life we live, is based on what God has done for us, as we are birthed into a new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. All we now live follows on from the fact that Jesus is risen; his resurrection is central to our identity and our purpose, our worship and our witness. The Lord is risen indeed! From now on, everything has ultimate meaning only because he lives...

Don't forget that if you are reading this online you can click on the readings and songs, as well as <https://rydebaptist.xyz> for other resources.

## BIBLE READINGS

[1 Peter 1:3-9](#)

[Psalm 16](#)

[John 20:24-31](#)

## SUGGESTED SONGS

How deep the Father's love for us  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLDGVI8D5UU>

Bless the Lord, o my soul  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE\\_IRIOE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_IRIOE)

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father we thank you for your love and faithfulness. Particularly we thank you that you raised Jesus to life again and that because of his resurrection we can be very confident in all the promises of life and faith that you have made. We thank you that our hope and our future is safe and secure in your hands and because of what you have done and nothing to do with what we have achieved or earned. Holy Spirit, continue to grow in us the gift and love of life, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

## TO PONDER

One of the greatest blessings, if that is the right word, of being confined at home and not being as out and about as before, is the time to think and to learn some new things. I have rediscovered books that are old favourites, and discovered some great books I haven't got round to reading yet. I've been learning to use computer software that will make life a little easier in the future, and I have signed up to some online courses to keep my little grey cells alert and active. I wonder what the things are that you might have been putting off and keeping for a rainy day. Yes, there is more time to pray and read the Bible, but there are also lots of other life-affirming things that can be done. Something creative perhaps. Why not commit to do something or to learn something new in the week ahead!

## TIME OF PRAYER

There are lots of resources for our prayers this week. 7/52 contains many suggestions. Ryde Baptist Church family list and our personal address books list those people we care about for our prayers. There will be the TV and radio news bulletins naming people or situations in need of prayer. There will be clubs and organisations that we belong to whose fellow members we can be praying for too. What are the top five things that you regularly pray for? What are the five things you are least likely to pray for and you could do so now? What prayer would you value for yourself, that you can share with someone else to pray with you later on today? Ring them up and pray with them over the phone!

## SUGGESTED SONGS

My Jesus, my Saviour  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn5CMSsAx\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gn5CMSsAx_c)

Above all powers  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5\\_cxhf5ISeg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_cxhf5ISeg)

## MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

**Introduction.** The situation in the room where the disciples were gathered was unique, so when I say 'have you ever had an experience like that?' I really need to explain a bit more what I mean. Jesus appeared to the disciples on the evening of Resurrection Sunday, but Thomas was not there. So Thomas did-

n't witness what happened. And the report of the others was rather unbelievable, so what was he to do? How should he respond to the information, 'We have seen the Lord!?' So have you ever been in a situation where you've been told something that doesn't ring true because you haven't seen it with your own eyes or experienced it in some other tangible way? It doesn't have to be anything particularly miraculous, just a matter of trusting the news as given. We might take quite a lot of convincing!

**Bible.** Roll on one week. We don't know what the disciples or even Jesus were doing during that time, but we do know that a week later the disciples are again in the house and that this time Thomas is present. Jesus again comes and stands among them and greets them, 'Peace be with you!' Of course 'shalom' is the traditional greeting, but in light of the fear and confusion that would have surrounded this small community over the past ten days or so, this will not only have conveyed a necessary calm but also the 'do not be afraid' message that Jesus also regularly gave. The peace that passes all understanding is also the peace that takes away all fear. Sometimes it isn't just that we cannot or are unwilling to believe, or even that we don't have the necessary evidence; sometimes we are afraid to believe. We are afraid to believe because if we do, then we will have to make changes to our lives, our behaviour, our relation-