

Sunday service for 24 May 2020

Easter 7

St Peter's Peebles and St Andrew's Innerleithen

Introduction: Welcome to our service today for the 7th Sunday of Easter. It is good to be together this morning as God's people in the congregations of St Peter's and St Andrew's. Last Thursday was Ascension Day, the great feast 40 days after Easter, marking the moment when Jesus Christ no longer appeared to the disciples physically, and was worshipped as Lord. Today, the final Sunday in the Easter Season, we join in the worship of Jesus with millions of Christians throughout the world, and look forward to the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit to everyone celebrated in the feast of Pentecost, next Sunday.

Opening prayer: Let us pray

Almighty God, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven. Mercifully give us faith to know that, as he promised, he abides with us on earth to the end of time; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Opening Hymn: 41 Hallelujah Sing to Jesus

Click here for a YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/FTrCIYH1Yw4>

1. Hallelujah! Sing to Jesus,
His the sceptre, His the throne;
Hallelujah! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood;
Jesus out of every nation
hath redeemed us by His blood.

2. Hallelujah! not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now;
Hallelujah! He is near us,
faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received Him
When the forty days were o'er,

shall our hearts forget His promise,
I am with you evermore.

3. Hallelujah! bread of heaven!
Thou on earth our food, our stay;
Hallelujah! here the sinful
flee to Thee from day to day.
Intercessor, friend of sinners,
earth's Redeemer, plead for me,
Where the songs of all the sinless
sweep across the crystal sea.

4. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory be to God on high;
to the Father and the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
glory to the Holy Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
to the triune Majesty.

Words by W C Dix

Confession:

God our creator, you have welcomed humanity into eternal glory.

Lord, have mercy; **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus, you plead for us at the Father's side.

Christ, have mercy; **Christ have mercy.**

Holy Spirit, you have been promised to fill us with love.

Lord, Have mercy; **Lord, have mercy.**

God, who is both power and love forgive you and free you from our sins, heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading 1 Acts 1. 6-14 *(read by Anne Rogers)*

The Ascension of Jesus

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' **7** He replied, 'It is not for you to

know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' **9** When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. **10** While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. **11** They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. **13** When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of[a] James. **14** All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Reading 2: The Gospel according to John. chapter 17, 1-11 (*read by Peter Ferguson-Smyth*)

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

17 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, **2** since you have given him authority over all people,[a] to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. **3** And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. **4** I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. **5** So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

6 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. **7** Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; **8** for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. **9** I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. **10** All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. **11** And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Gospel Reflection: *(Written and presented by the Rev Colin Chaplin)*

Glory

Many years ago, I met a man by the name of Stan. He was a member of a congregation I was fortunate to be part of and he played an important part in its life. A thinking person willing to help in Sunday worship, that is, until I asked him one Sunday morning to read an Old testament lesson. His response was a surprise he declined politely and after the service explained why, telling me of his wartime experience. Sadly, like many other young men and women of his generation he had been exposed to the full horrors of a conflict that had scarred him with wounds that had never healed and too often he had read in scripture words and language that had military and triumphant overtones. His aversion to anything that seemed to glorify War made it impossible for him to read anything of that nature.

At the time I did not completely understand his attitude but in the intervening years the power of words to convict, convince and to be a force for good is something I have experienced, sadly though, that same power can be used to manipulate exploit and destroy. Others know this Power it is used daily to shape our responses and to distort the truth. It is the background noise of our daily lives insidiously doing its thing, imperceptibly imposing itself on our decisions and the way we understand our world. It was the way the Nazi propaganda machine was able to bring almost a whole nation to believe their cause was just and fight to the bitter end. A more recent example with a more positive intention could be seen in the Woman's rights movement where their concentration on terminology successfully educated western societies attitudes towards this issue and slowly brought about a change.

There is a lesson to be learned from all of this for those whose calling is to bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus to this generation and times, and it is to understand what we say and to know what we mean when we use the language of religion. One word in particular has drawn my attention this Easter it is Glory and over and again the question I have found myself asking is, what is this Glory we sing about week by week? What is this condition that it was worth dying for.?

Perhaps it is in the ability of our Lord to draw men and women to his personality and message that we find this quality. Or is it in the eventual founding of a world religion? I would like to suggest that there is a wider deeper meaning to what after all has something of the divine embedded in what Glory means. Something simple yet more profound which was, I have come to believe, in the way that Jesus lived within Creation. A way that fed

into his mission. A way that enabled and facilitated his mighty works. A way that revealed his divine nature.

In the Gospel according to John in his final discourse to his Disciples Jesus said “I am the way the truth and the light” the first Christians were Known as the People of the way. That way, I think, was to know or to seek to be in harmony with a creation that provided a place where all life could be sustained. A place where to be, was enough, a place where the gift and abilities of our species, Homo Sapiens, could contribute to a state or condition where there would be the perfecting of the creator’s purpose. Scientists refer to a symbiotic relationship being the way species enter into a mutually beneficial relationship with each other and I wonder if in his teachings Jesus is revealing the way to attain to this. Remember his words “Consider the Lilies of the field Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these” and are we not with them part of the creative purpose. Could this be the Glory of God, the Glory that was revealed in Jesus, the Glory of a people fulfilling the purpose and intention of a Creator who dreamed it all to be.?

O that it could be so, as we contemplate a return to our shared world is it possible, that empowered by the Spirit of the God of all Being and through the teachings and sacrifice of our Lord and all those who have given their lives to keep us safe in the current crisis, we could see a new normal inspired by the vision of he who said “behold I make all things new”? and will we bring our hearts and minds and our wills to share in the creative endeavour? my prayer is that we will make it so.

Anthem “Listen”, sing by the choir of St Mary’s Cathedral Glasgow

YouTube link <https://youtu.be/QSang9BCn6k>

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Intercessions: *(written and read by Graeme Herd)*

Risen and Ascended Lord come among us.

Fill us with your glory.

As the Church of God, gathered today from within our own homes,
yet still one in the fellowship we share through Christ,
help us to walk as children of the light,
That we may proclaim you as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Risen and Ascended Lord come among us.

Fill us with your glory.

Free us from the powers of evil.
Bring us into the glorious liberty of the children of God,
that the kingdoms of the world may become the Kingdom of God.
Risen and Ascended Lord come among us.

Fill us with your glory.

For all who are affected by coronavirus,
through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:
For those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,
that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:
For the vulnerable and the fearful,
for the gravely ill and the dying,
that they may know your comfort and peace:

Pause for silence reflection

Risen and Ascended Lord come among us.
Fill us with your glory, Amen.

Let us say together The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Hymn: There is a Higher Throne (MP1116)

Click here for a YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/BAGX9iWQ8kl>

1. There is a higher throne
than all this world has known,
where faithful ones from every tongue
will one day come.

Before the Son we'll stand,
made faultless through the Lamb,
believing hearts find promised grace;
salvation comes.

Chorus

*Hear heaven's voices sing,
their thunderous anthem rings
through emerald courts and sapphire skies,
their praises rise.*

*All glory, wisdom, power,
strength, thanks and honour are
to God, our King who reigns on high
for evermore.*

2. And there we'll find our home,
our life before the throne;
we'll honour Him in perfect song
where we belong.
He'll wipe each tear-stained eye,
as thirst and hunger die;
the Lamb becomes our Shepherd King;
we'll reign with Him.

Chorus

*Hear heaven's voices sing,
their thunderous anthem rings
through emerald courts and sapphire skies,
their praises rise.*

*All glory, wisdom, power,
strength, thanks and honour are
to God, our King who reigns on high
for evermore.*

by Krysten and Keith Getty

Concluding prayer and Blessing:

Christ our exalted King pour upon you his abundant gifts and bring you to reign with him in glory; and the +Blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

NOTICES

Lock-down and shielding is a difficult challenge for all of us. Please remember that the Clergy and Vestries are there for you.

THIS WEEK

Wednesdays at 9.30am "Praying Together, Innerleithen and Walkerburn"

Thursday 28 May at 10.00am A Gathering for those who attend, or would like to attend, the weekly Thursday morning service at St Peter's

Sunday May 31, Pentecost Sunday, Emma Herd is planning a service for all ages.

Sunday June 1, Trinity Sunday, Holy Communion led by Cedric Blakey with Robin Wilson, who will also offer the reflection.

GIVING TO ST PETER'S AND ST ANDREW'S

For those who would like to make a gift to St Peter's please email Judy Cameron on heyjude65@sky.com for details of various ways you can contribute.

For those who would like to make a gift to St Andrew's please email Jane Sargent on mtbjane@googlemail.com for similar details.

Thank you so much to all those who have been able to maintain their regular standing orders as a means of giving towards God's mission.

Please continue to pray for our Rector designate, Andrew, and his wife Margaret as they prepare for their move to Scotland on 1 June.