

Welcome

Welcome everyone, whether you're someone who's already familiar with the life of this particular church, or 'looking in' on that life on this occasion. It's important to us at Tyndale *not* to offer a service just for the in-crowd, but truly *public* worship; it's Christian, of course, but hopefully it can be received by anyone - those who share Christian belief and hold it deeply, those who are less sure about *what* they believe, as well as those who, especially in these extraordinary times, find that questions about life, suffering, mortality and meaning come to the fore.

This *is* worship - it won't answer every question, but nor, hopefully, will it sound like it's taking place in a religious bubble that ignores the real world and the questions it poses for us all.

The opening song is sung for us by Mike Garnier

'See the stricken boat' – sung by Mike Garnier

Stuart Townend & Gary Sadler

Call to Worship

The man who calmed the sea - in a world that's anything *but* calm, where the storms of suffering flood through the world; the winds of anxiety blow hard and the quaking uncertainties of all our lives threaten to overwhelm us, we come once more to the calm, still centre, where God is to be found, in the ancient, peace-filled, ever-inspiring stories and story of Jesus, the wandering Galilean who is, we proclaim, the Saviour of the World - and we worship

'All heaven declares' – sung by Martin Ball

Noel Richards

Opening Prayer

The glory of the risen Lord, in the season of Easter - the very heart of the Christian message - Lord God we worship you for this mystery and hope; we praise you for this sign of peace; we rejoice for you have lodged this glorious truth deep in our hearts and set it free in the world - not just during the season of Easter, but for all time and for every place and circumstance. And in the challenging circumstances of this locked down world we acknowledge that mysterious, peaceful, hopeful sign once more; and in view of the changing circumstances of our lives we recognise that mysterious, peaceful, hopeful sign again - the sign of your endless love - praise be - the sign of your unending hope - praise be - the sign of your unlimited peace - praise be - praise be to you, O Lord, maker and sustainer of all; Saviour of each in Christ, Holy Spirit of new life for everyone and all the world

Lord, forgive us when we have failed to trust in you; forgive us when we have neglected to share your love, forgive us when we have worked to undermine the things that make for peace amongst us and beyond us; forgive us and restore us, we pray..

We wait on your Word (pause).. 'Jesus said 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do' - Father thank you for forgiving us in Jesus, because of Jesus, through Jesus -

Now accept our worship, lead us on and continue to hold us, we pray

'He will hold me fast'

Music by Keith Getty to old words, Sung by Kristyn Getty.

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Godly Play: Knowing Jesus in a new way - Known in the morning

Readings [John 21:1-19](#) [Psalm 139:1-24](#)

The Grace is said:

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

'Be not afraid'

John Michael Talbot

'Be not afraid, I go before you always, Come follow me, and I will give you rest.'

Address

Things will look better in the morning - how often we've heard *that* said - a bad exam result; the end of a relationship, a job not offered, bad news about our health - news hits us hard and we maunder through the day and night and maybe can't sleep, then, eventually, we drift off with that old, universal advice ringing in our ears - things will look better in the morning. Not always, though; I'm guessing that for many people near and far during this crisis, things look as bad in the morning as they did the night before - as a loved one fails to respond to ventilator treatment, a well-known neighbour is no longer around; a statistic fails to move in a positive direction after long hours of policy planning and implementation - things will look better in the morning? We comfort ourselves with such sayings, they are sometimes true...but not always..

Often we look for ways of connecting our experiences to the stories at the heart of the faith - the stories of Jesus - especially during the season of Easter, the collection of stories of the various ways in which the risen Jesus appeared to his disciples. They are all lovely stories; this one is lovely, I think, by revealing the deep knowledge Jesus had of Peter, one of his most enthusiastic, but fickle, disciples - a knowledge that takes on an extra dimension when Jesus is risen.

I wonder if Peter said to himself, through that long night-shift of frustrating, fruitless, searching in the dark for the shoals of fish - apparently it's quite usual in places such as the Sea of Galilee to fish at night - the water cools off; fish that have dived deep to find cooler water come back nearer the surface, they're more likely to be caught then, obviously - I wonder if Peter said to himself, 'things will look better in the morning' - things such as the grief, guilt, loss and disappointment they would all have felt at the events that culminated in the cross.

It's a bit odd, at first, to come across this story after the finish to the gospel at the end of chapter 20. It's a fitting end to the whole of John's gospel story; all the loose ends have been tied up. The gospel that *begins* with a conclusion - 'But to all *who* received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God', *ends* with the conclusion fulfilled: Thomas received him. And it concludes with the purpose clearly laid out - 'these are written so that *you* may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing *you* may have life in his name'.

No need for anything more, really...but I'm reminded of the great trilogy of the Lord of the Rings - in a way it all comes to a triumphal, complete end, when Frodo and Sam make it to Mount Mordor and the One Ring falls into the Cracks of Doom, along with Gollum, and the Dark Lord's power ebbs away.

Yet it wouldn't feel complete without the smaller, special, personal end, as the Hobbits return to the Shire and the remnant of the Quest set out from the Far Havens on their final, fading journey...

Things rarely just end, do they? There's always something after...this lockdown won't just end one day; there'll be a drawn out, tentative process as the world emerges and starts to adjust to a new reality.

The 'war' against the virus won't just be won, one day. A vaccine may take months to be developed, months more to be rolled out all across the world.

VE day was celebrated on Friday, but as much as that was a cause of real celebration for some, the war in the Pacific dragged on till August 1945, it took months to rehabilitate concentration camp survivors and much longer to rebuild much of Europe.

Great, profound things happen and cause great change, don't they? But they don't just happen - their effects last for ages - *postmortem*, the *anticlimax*; the *aftermath*

So it is in John's gospel - the glorious, beautiful ending as Jesus appears to his followers, to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples, to Thomas is enough in one way - but like 'they all lived happily ever after' at the end of the fairy story, we come away thinking yes, but what happened next, after the Prince married Cinderella or Rapunzel came down from the tower?

What seems to have happened next is that disciples such as Peter went back to their old lives - and so important had he been through the whole story - and the others, especially 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', that it just feels as if something is needed to finish it off.

So imagine this; Peter, with the others, returning to their old lives; Jesus has already appeared to them in chapter 20 and called them to go in His name: 'I am sending you' - and they-presumably-had responded

But it's much more human, much more real, to imagine them returning to their old lives - the risen Jesus was a mystery, what had happened in Jerusalem was traumatic - no surprise that they went back to how it had been before; to try to reconnect with familiar ways - maybe the whole three years of wandering around with Jesus, combined with the tragic ending and the mysterious rising felt like a dream -

Maybe they just wanted to get back to some normality - don't we all? This lockdown begins to feel unreal, after a time - life can't go on like this for much longer, can it? We just need to get back...to work, to open businesses, to family, to friendships, and holidays, and coffee shops..and all sorts.

But reality bites, for Peter and the others - a long night's frustrating, fruitless fishing...nothing.. imagine, with all the bewilderment of Jerusalem, the loss of Jesus, the guilt of betrayal, the wonderful confusion of the rising...imagine..

Things'll feel better in the morning - the sun will rise on another day and we'll be able to see that much is as it was before; nothing much has changed....imagine...

Except, *everything* has changed - that's the point of the story, I think. Let's leave aside on this occasion lots of the details; just enough to point to the fact that, in the morning, after a fruitless night's fishing, the risen Jesus meets Peter and the others on the beach; he directs them to where the fish are to be found; he prepares breakfast on the beach - how good does that sound in the present lockdown - breakfast on the beach! -

And *everything's changed*. Peter, the disciple whom Jesus loved, the others; none dared to ask, 'who are you?' because they all knew (instinctively I suppose) that it was the Lord - that it was the Jesus they had known in Galilee - the very same, yet not the same at all - *everything* had changed.

I have a feeling that when we eventually emerge much will seem the same as it was before, but actually most things will be quite different; we can't quite imagine it now and I don't suppose we quite know how we'll cope - most will, probably; in the longer view of history humanity will look back on this as just one more in the many trials that our race has overcome down the centuries

But the story reminds us - the story is intended to show us that *nothing will ever be the same again* - not so much after this virus, not so much after a war or an earthquake or whatever, but after humanity's destiny has been changed utterly, by the rising of Jesus.

And why? Because we are known, that's why. In the grand level-playing field scheme of things Peter shouldn't really get a look-in in the new world; he's too compromised by his betrayal of Jesus; too impetuous; too impulsive ever to be someone involved in ushering in a new world. In a soap opera he'd be found out; in a Hollywood film he'd be blasted into the middle of next week; in a blockbuster novel he'd be the tragic, fallen hero

But he is *known*. Actually, I think that's where the hope of Easter really lies. We are known - known by God; our race is known, our frailties are known, each one, our mortality is known - like never before, as someone is infamous for saying.. known by a human being who dies as we die and then, by a power beyond our capacity to comprehend - God's power indeed - rises..

And in the morning - when nothing looks that much better really, we are known - Peter is forgiven - three times, as it happens - the disciple whom Jesus loved is promised a Kingdom - the others, too

And us? - this story is for us - we are known - like we've always been known, since before we were born as the Psalm says - and despite what we are - despite the circumstances that surround us - we are lifted up..

Now...feed my sheep...feed my sheep....feed my sheep

Prayers

We are known; that's why as Christians we are bound to pray through all this; others may cope or not as the case may be accepting that this is all taking place in a cold, unfeeling universe, but we are bound to pray because, we believe, we are known - God knows..the secrets of our hearts and the frailties of our world. We are known...

We pray for those who are at risk of being unknown through this crisis - casual workers whose work is newly recognised as important but who still remain anonymous; the gravely ill who face death alone; those who suffer terrible abuse behind locked doors, the 'behind-the-scenes' researchers and scientists whose dogged research and innovation will never be recognised -

This crisis threatens to undermine the meaning of many people's lives; Lord, we believe, you know; we pray by faith that the new world will give full meaning to the worth and value of all people

Lord, **hear our prayer**

We pray for those known to us; from whom we are separated at the moment, by distance and 'lockdown' conditions. We yearn to be with them again;

(pause in quiet); Lord, still we believe they are known to you; we pray by faith that the new world will make ample room for and will give a new priority to, relationships amongst families and friends - that they may flourish

Lord, **hear our prayer**

We pray for those who do not really know what is happening around them - people with learning difficulties, autistic children, sufferers from memory loss, the drug and alcohol addicted - and for those who care for them; Lord, still we believe such as these are known and held in your love; we pray by faith that the new world will make plenty of room to meet their needs

Lord, **hear our prayer**

We offer all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, to God in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Offering

The new world will be challenging in all sorts of ways - not least for those who are without work, or for those who have lost much of what they have built up - our offering is no more than a sign, but an important one, of the spirit that will be needed to frame and enliven that world - the spirit of generosity, openness and welcome.

Lord, with thankful hearts we give of ourselves in these and all our gifts - and look to a new world that ever more resembles your Kingdom - Amen.

'Thine be the glory'

Blessing

Thank you for being a part of this service; thanks to Ian Holyer & Ian Waddington, Rachel Haig, Rachel Molyneux and Nick and Tina Parsons

A 'coffee together though apart' time follows, at 11.30 am

Knowing Jesus in a new way – Known in the morning

On this Sunday in the season of Easter we remember how the disciples went north to Galilee, as Jesus told them. It was a long journey, some 80 miles. It took about 4 days to walk.

Many of them were fishermen, so they went to the Sea of Galilee to rest. This was a place they knew as boys. They had fished there with their fathers. Suddenly Peter stood up and said, "I'm going fishing." The rest went with him to prepare the boat. Soon they pushed out onto the lake and the sail filled with wind. They fished all night, but they caught nothing. Still, the sounds and smells of the lake comforted them. They were home.

In the morning the sky turned pink and then blue. They could make out the shore and someone standing by a fire. They could see the smoke and the red glow from the charcoal burning.

"Have you caught anything?" All they could say was, "No."

"Throw your nets on the other side." What could they lose? They pulled in the empty nets and threw them out on the other side. They could feel the fish moving as they held the ropes.

John was not paying attention to fish. He leaned forward and watched the man moving on the shore. He said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Peter stood up. He jumped. He swam. He felt the sand under his feet and waded ashore.

The others turned the boat towards land. The nets were so full they could not pull them in, so they dragged them behind the boat.

As they walked towards the fire, the stranger called out, "Bring some fish." When they gathered around the fire, the stranger was no stranger. They all knew it was Jesus but they were afraid to say anything.

"Have some breakfast." There were fish cooking on the fire. He gave them fish and bread. They talked as they ate. The fish and bread also tasted of home.

Then Jesus asked Peter, "Do *you* love me?" "Yes, of course." "Feed my lambs."

"Do you *love* me?" "Yes." "Tend my sheep."

"Do you love *me*?" "You already know I do." "Feed my sheep."

He began to talk to Peter about growing old and how you need help in old age. Sometimes people tell you what to do, even if you don't want them to. Years later they wondered if Jesus had been preparing Peter for his death in Rome as an old man.

Jesus said, "Follow me." Did he mean all of them? No. Peter got up and the two of them walked off along the shoreline. Peter looked back and saw John following them. "What about this man? Will he die like the rest of us?" "It is not for you to know such things." Peter fell silent and Jesus was gone.

I wonder what are the words that stick in your mind from this story today?

I wonder what it means to follow Jesus?

I wonder what it means to 'feed my sheep' as Jesus asked?

I wonder how much time we spend looking at other people's lives instead of looking after our own?

