

**Worship Service - 10 May 2020 Revd Jane Braund.**

Prayer: Lord we commit this time to you, believing and trusting in you Lord Jesus. You are the Way, the Truth and the Life and we ask that you would give us a hunger and a desire for the spiritual food of your word. As we feed on your word and experience more of you, may we start to grow and mature. Help us to rid ourselves of those roots of compromise, disobedience and sin as we learn to live in agreement with your Holy Spirit. May we learn to truly worship you in Spirit and in truth. Amen.

(Based on 1 Peter 2: 2 - 5)

Hymn: 455 All my hope on God is founded

Readings: John 14 : 1 - 14, 27  
Psalm 31  
Acts 7: 55 - 60

I wonder how many of you have had to do 'new' things during this time of lockdown? We have had to learn to social distance; to rely perhaps on others doing our shopping; I have had the new experience of cutting my husband's hair - and so has he! (You'll have to ask him if it was successful or not but I'm not sure he was looking for a Mohican!) Lots of new things and new ways of doing things.

Many of us don't like change at the best of times and certainly not when it is forced on us in a crisis situation. For many this is a fearful and anxious time as we wonder what is going to happen.

The first verse of the reading from John is one that has stuck with me during this time. In chapter 13, Jesus has just washed his disciples' feet and as he talks with them he tells them that he is going to leave, that he is going away. Suddenly all their world is turned upside down. They had left everything to follow him and now all their hopes and dreams that he was the one to save them from Roman rule are gone - all shattered and lying in tatters at their feet.

Knowing their anxiety, their sorrow and fear Jesus says to them, 'Do not be troubled and upset. Believe in God, believe also in me'. He later goes on to say, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid'.

Jesus is saying that trust in him is an antidote for an anxious and troubled heart. When we are anxious, confused, frightened by all that is happening around us we can have the assurance that trusting and believing in Jesus can bring us peace. God's peace is not as the world understands and longs for peace. God's peace is the presence of Jesus, the presence of God himself.

As we go through these difficult times, as we face loss - loss of loved ones, loss of jobs, loss of life as we know it; as we mourn and grieve, feel confused, bewildered and alone - in the midst of it all we can turn to Jesus and believe and

**Worship Service - 10 May 2020 Revd Jane Braund.**

trust in him to guide us through and give us peace - because Jesus is the Way.

When Jesus was speaking to his disciples he had told them he had to go, that he was leaving them - not to go to heaven but to go to the cross, through which the way would be opened up for us to be restored to the Father. Our destination is not 'to get to heaven'. Our true destination is the Father and to reach that destination there is only one possible way - through union with Jesus. There is no other way to the Father - not good works, not living a good life however important these things are - but through Jesus. To suggest anything else is just not what scripture says, not what Jesus says.

But the wonderful thing is that by Jesus going to the cross he has opened up the way to the Father, and the Father's heart is full of love for his Son, and so to all who believe in Jesus the way has been opened up.

It is Jesus who gives us peace in these troubled times; Jesus whose presence brings peace - not the fragility of peace the world offers in its longing to know peace - but a true heart peace that transcends all understanding. Stephen knew that peace as he spoke to the leaders knowing it would end in his death but trusting in Jesus. Peter knew that peace as he slept between the guards in prison even while expecting to die the following day (Acts 12). The Psalmist knew this peace as he trusted in the Lord. He knew what it was to

shelter in the presence of the Lord - 'Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord', he cries (31 v 24)

As we look for the way forward to come out of this crisis we can trust the Lord to guide us and to show us the way - believing and trusting in Jesus the one who has already overcome, to see us through. The world will need those who have found this heart peace when we come through, and as we face all that is yet to come. It will need the peace only Jesus can bring.

May you know and discover for yourself that peace today, as you trust in Jesus, amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, you have said that you are the way, the truth, and the life. Do not let us stray from you who are the way, nor to distrust you who are the truth, nor to rest in anything other than you, who are the life.

Teach us by your Holy Spirit, what to believe, what to do, and where to take our rest.

We ask it for your own name's sake.

(Desiderius Erasmus)

Continue in prayer closing with The Lord's Prayer

Hymns: 351 In Christ alone

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace, amen.