

21st June 2020 6pm United with Jesus in his Resurrection

Copy of readings and transcript of talk only

Service led by Val Whiteman, talk by Anthony Manning

Bible readings by Geoff Whiteman and Hanne Manning

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Epistle: Romans 6:1b-11 [NIVUK]

[Geoff Whiteman:]

Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel: Matthew 10:24-39

[Hanne Manning:]

²⁴ 'The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶ 'So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.

³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² ‘Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ ‘Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn

“a man against his father,

a daughter against her mother,

a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law –

³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.”

³⁷ ‘Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Talk

[Anthony Manning:]

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, thank you for drawing us into all that you are doing in the world.

Amen.

So, what does it mean that, as we just read from Paul, we are united with Jesus Christ in His death, and in His resurrection? Hmm.

God the Father, the Creator, is the meaning, the value, of everything, especially the meaning of life, of awareness, of choosing, of priorities, and the culture and society that lead us to think the way we do.

Several examples:

How we, as individuals and as the whole human race, respect our planet, our environment, that's so important.

And we have started to see things differently in this time. Recently we've started to think about how different sorts of people are valued, respected; Black Lives Matter now; or do they?

How our country is hit by this pandemic, and how we can respond to it. How we will care for those whose life, food, whose opportunities are destroyed by this pandemic? I'm so pleased that St John's Church is very involved in the local Foodbank. But I'm really concerned to read that the World Food Programme expects that, by the end of this year, the number of people around the world facing acute food insecurity will have doubled to a quarter of a billion. How much God cares about issues like these!

Jesus is the Word of God, God expressing himself in human life. As the letter to the Hebrews says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!” Jesus came to bring in God's kingdom, God's way of doing things. And how we as individuals and societies fit in to God's way of doing things.

What are God's priorities? When Jesus was asked that, he said, "Love God and love your neighbour." And (in the story he told of the good Samaritan) "especially the person you come across who really needs your help."

But the people in power, said 'No' to Jesus, 'We'll keep to our way.' And they got rid of him – or so they thought! How he suffered! But he came through it. He is alive, much more alive now!

If you were baptised by John the baptist in the River Jordan, he pulled you down under the water, like drowning, like dying with Jesus, and then he pulled you up again into the fresh air, alive again, like coming alive with Jesus! We've just heard from Paul's words in chapter 6 of his letter to the Romans:

Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?

And then Paul writes:

If we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Jesus (together with his body of all his followers) is still pushing against bad ways, still working for God's priorities, and, often, rejected again. The last words of Jesus that we read from Matthew's Gospel were:

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Following Jesus is demanding.

Some things to think about: where is your life heading? If you have been baptised (your choice or your parents, perhaps), what does that mean to you? Explore its significance a bit more deeply. If you haven't been baptised, is it time to think about that as part of your connection to Jesus? If you are a godparent, even if you have lost touch with your godchildren, do pray for them, asking that they may be part of what God is doing in the world.

Thank you, Jesus, for drawing us in to all that you are doing in the world!
Amen!

[Transcribed by <https://otter.ai> with help from Hamish Blair]

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