



St. Columba's Church Stewarton

(SC013595) (CCLI 1095831)

Home Service – April Week 3

Prayer

Eternal and Gracious God, we come before you in the name of Christ, setting aside time and space to reflect on your greatness, to rejoice in your goodness and to respond to you with gladness. Receive our worship we pray and draw us closer to you and to another, in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn CH4 424 Blest be the everlasting God

Reading Luke 24: 36 - 48

The text from today is taken from the gospel reading. We read there, as we read from the Gospel of John last week, that on the day of his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and showed them the marks of his love, those marks engraved on his hands and feet, and in his side. Then, while reminding them of what he had said before he died, we are told he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures.

He opened their minds so that they could understand the scriptures.

Why didn't Jesus do this earlier? Why didn't Jesus open their minds to understand the scriptures before he died?

Surely it would have made it easier for them - easier for them to believe in him, easier for them to follow him, easier for them to accept the miracle of his resurrection.

Surely everything could have gone so much better during the days of Jesus' ministry if his disciples had understood the scriptures at that time. But they didn't understand. Instead, throughout the gospels we see the disciples stumbling and stumbling, and we see Jesus rebuking them and teaching them over and over again what the right way is.

So, why did Jesus wait to open their minds so that they could understand the scriptures and thereby understand him?

I believe that the answer lies in the fact that the disciples had to experience the reality of Jesus' death and resurrection before

they could really understand the Bible. Their hearts and minds could not be opened, they could not possibly understand, until they were prepared for it, by all of what they had heard, seen, and felt with Jesus...

There are many people today in the same situation, they know the scriptures, but they do not understand them. They haven't entered into the wholeness of the message. Rather, some parts they have accepted, and other parts they have rejected or ignored without ever considering the connections between the parts.

Indeed - a lot of us are like the disciples before Easter Sunday. We shrink away from much of what Jesus says - we don't want to hear about carrying the burdens of others we don't want to hear about suffering for love, we don't want to hear about giving up family and home for the sake of the gospel. Nor do we want to hear about how good people, people like Jesus, have to die before they can become fully alive.

This material from scripture is not good news to us, just as it was not good news to the disciples. We can't see how or why it might be important for us. Rather, for us, as for the disciples, good news, welcome news, consists of hearing about the glory to be given the faithful, of hearing how the righteous will be given power, the humble given the earth, and the poor in Spirit the kingdom of heaven. But without the one there cannot be the other. We cannot have the earth unless we carry the burdens of others. We cannot have the Kingdom of heaven without the willingness to put God before our own desires, our own families. We cannot have power without the willingness to suffer, and we cannot have glory without the willingness to die.

We too, like the first disciples cannot understand the scriptures until our minds have been opened by our experience with him, and by our faith in his resurrection. Without believing in Jesus and the fact that he both died and rose for us we are lost. We can know a lot about him, but never understand him or experience all that he has in store for us.

We can know the biography of Jesus that is found in the scriptures, - we can explore the laws that are written down and debate the reasons for why this or that happened, we can gain all kinds of knowledge about scripture, but none of it will give us the understanding that God wants us to have.

If we would understand what the scriptures are really all about,

then we must not only open them, but we must also allow Jesus to open our minds - by placing our trust in him, in the one to whom the scriptures point. Then we will truly understand, and we will praise God for it, and for the life he has given us. AMEN

Prayer

Lord God, we come to you in wonder in reverence in humility, seeking your guidance, your strength, your mercy. You are the source and sustainer of our lives. Whoever we are and wherever we are, you are with us surrounding us with your love. We thank you for your constant kindness and unfailing mercy for although we fail you, you do not fail us.

Lord, you have given us a world full of rich resources to feed us all and to provide us with all that body and mind could need: yet the poor are still with us, deprived of food, of homes, of education and dignity; deprived of healing and of hope. Forgive our inhumanity; forgive our politics and commerce, forgive our selfishness and greed. Forgive us too O God, for thinking that our selfish looking after one another is equivalent to the love you want from us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

We bring to you our world, a world of so much pain, so much sorrow. We pray for an end to war in The Holy Land, in Ukraine, in other troubled areas of the world. Be with the leaders of the nations and guide them in the ways that lead to peace. Put aside any sense of revenge or selfish boasting and let there be an end to hostilities.

We pray for those who we know who are ill, in body mind or spirit and we pray for those who give of their time and their skill and their sympathy to help one another. Help them in all that they do and through them bring wholeness to any who are in need.

We remember today those who are bereaved and any who are dying. May they know the promise that you are with them, now and for evermore.

May we hold on to that hope until the day comes when we too will be in your nearer presence. All this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn CH4 458 At the name of Jesus

Blessing

May the Blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be with you and all those whom you love, this day and always, Amen.

Intimations:

Word for Today – May, June, July is now available from Ellen Barton.

Bible Study/Prayer group Monday 22nd April at 1.30pm

Health Checks Wednesday 24th April 11-12.30 in the hall

Communion Service will take place on Sunday 28th April at 11am in the Church.

Pastoral Care - The Very Reverend William Hewitt will celebrate Holy Communion at the service at Lochhead Court next Sunday 28th April at 2.00 pm. Anyone who misses the Communion in Church will be made very welcome.

Notice - It is with great sadness we record the death of Mrs. May Pettigrew. May was a member of the Board for a number of years. Our love and prayers are with her family at this very sad time.

St Columba's Church website – please visit our website for full details of all upcoming events and our weekly intimations.

<https://stewartonstcolumbas.org>

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