

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit
SERVICE AT HOME – Sunday 7th April 2024

Prepared by Revd John Archer

Call to Worship

Let us be yours, O God. Let us not draw back from you, neither from your presence, nor from your cross. Touch our hearts and make them holy. Consecrate our lives and enlist them in your service. *Lucy Herbert (1669 – 1744)*

Read pray or sing StF 354 - Jesus is the name we honour
[Jesus is the Name we Honour - Lyrics and Music Video \(youtube.com\)](#)

- 1 Jesus is the name we honour;
Jesus is the name we praise.
Majestic name above all other names,
the highest heav'n and earth proclaim
that Jesus is our God.
We will glorify,
we will lift him high,
we will give him honour and praise.
We will glorify,
we will lift him high,
we will give him honour and praise.

- 2 Jesus is the name we worship;
Jesus is the name we trust.
He is the King above all other kings,
let all creation stand and sing
that Jesus is our God.

- 3 Jesus is the Father's splendour;
Jesus is the Father's joy.
He will return to reign in majesty,
and every eye at last will see
that Jesus is our God.

Philip Lawson-Johnston

A Prayer for Low Sunday

Sovereign God

We thank you for the realities of Easter which we continue to celebrate today,
realities that make such a difference to life
the victory of good over evil,
love over hate, life over death;
the turning of weakness into strength,
fear into courage, doubt into faith;
a new beginning when it had seemed like the end,
new confidence where there had been confusion.

Teach us to live each day as your Easter People

Sovereign God

We thank you that Easter is
not just about events long ago, but about life now,

not just about others, but about us,
not just about one thing but about everything.
Teach us to live each day as your Easter People

Help us to live each day in the light of Easter
with its joy bubbling up in our hearts.
Its laughter shining from our eyes,
and its message always on our lips.
So that others, seeing the difference it has made to us,
discover the difference it can make for them.
Teach us to live each day as your Easter People to the
glory of your name. Amen.

We pray 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.

Bible Reading - John 20 : 19 – 31

Read pray or sing StF 273 - Here hangs a man discarded
[Here hangs a man discarded. Lyric video \(StF 273\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

- 1 Here hangs a man discarded,
a scarecrow hoisted high,
a nonsense pointing nowhere
to all who hurry by.
- 2 Can such a clown of sorrows
still bring a useful word,
when faith and love seem phantoms
and every hope absurd?
- 3 Yet here is help and comfort
for lives by comfort bound,
when drums of dazzling progress
give strangely hollow sound:
- 4 Life, emptied of all meaning,
drained out in bleak distress,
can share in broken silence
our deepest emptiness:
- 5 And love that freely entered
the pit of life's despair,

can name our hidden darkness
and suffer with us there.

6 Christ, in our darkness risen,
help all who long for light
to hold the hand of promise
till faith receives its sight.

Brian Wren (b. 1936)

Thomas - A Meditation

I wanted to know, that's all, to see for myself if it could
possibly be true – was that so awful?

Remember we'd *all* doubted at first when the women
came back that morning, dismissing their story of the
empty tomb as so much nonsense. So why point the
finger at me, as though *I* questioned and *they* didn't?

All right the situation had changed by then, I accept, for
they all claim to have seen him in the meantime, and
not just them but others, each adamant the Lord had
risen. Yet as much as I wanted to believe it, I simply
couldn't, not unless the proof was spelt out to me in
black and white.

That was me all over I'm afraid, the way I'd been since I
was a boy, struggling to accept anything I couldn't
touch for myself or see with my own eyes, and I had
said as much to Jesus before he died, that day he spoke
about his father's house, and his going there to prepare
a place for us. 'Believe in God,' he'd said, 'believe also in
me'.

A wonderful promise yes, only to me he was talking in
riddles, and I made no bones about it.
'Lord, we do not know where you are going how can we
know the way?'

He wasn't angry with me, though he could have been
for after all that time, all that he said, I should have
known, just as I should have understood. He would
arise from the tomb and return among us.

He'd spoken of it often enough, done his best to
prepare us, not just for his death, but his resurrection
to follow, but, as so often, we dwelt on the bad and
forgot the good, unable to see beyond the demands of
the present moment.

So despite it all, I refused to believe, convinced that
there were still too many questions and not enough
answers. And I'd be doing that still, still wondering if it
could ever be, but for his grace.

For suddenly he was there again, standing among us,
arms outstretched in welcome. Those pierced hands

reaching out to me -Thomas and I knew I'd been wrong
– he was alive, just as they said., risen and victorious.
And I knelt down in worship, my heart overflowing with
thanksgiving, for he'd, come, despite my lack of faith I
had doubted him, but he still believed in me!

Read Pray or sing StF594 - Lord Jesus you have come to us
[StF 594 - Lord Jesus Christ you have come to us](#)
[\(youtube.com\)](#)

1 Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
you are one with us,
Mary's Son;
cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in;
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
living Lord.

3 Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
born as one of us,
Mary's Son;
led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free;
living Lord Jesus, help us see
you are Lord.

4 Lord Jesus Christ,
we would come to you,
live our lives for you,
Son of God.
All your commands we know are true;
your many gifts will make us new;
into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.

Patrick Appleford (b. 1925)

Sermon "Seeing is Believing"

John 20: 20 *"Then were the disciples glad when they
saw the Lord"*

A masterpiece in understatement!!

When a naval ship returns after 6 months at sea you
don't write "And the navy wives were pleased to see
their husbands!" The disciples, who had been meeting
behind locked doors in fear, must have jumped up and
hugged each other and wept with joy.

1. Jesus was an extraordinary man

The disciples adored him. He had gathered around him
12 men – young, energetic, eager for life. Would they
follow 'a man of sorrows acquainted with grief' as
Handel describes him. They shared meals, roughing it,

living on the road. Witnessing the crowds hanging on his words, astonished by his healings. No. Jesus was extraordinary: strong physically, intelligent, unflappable, excellent company. The disciples were not cardboard cut out characters but strong personalities, who were as alive as we are. They adored him and we must grasp that if we are to understand the blinding misery that they suffered when Jesus, this superman, was crucified amongst the dung hills outside the city, by men unfit to untie the straps of his sandals. Our faith has its roots in our adoration of the extraordinary man Jesus of Nazareth.

2. Jesus the risen and marred Christ

This takes us a further step. Not just an extraordinary man but a risen Christ – God himself..

“Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord”

What they saw was more significant than what they heard. The message lay in what the Lord looked like. His appearance reinforced his words. No fanfare, no trumpets, no halo – not even an angel. Something more significant and important. They saw the wound marks on his body – a scarred and marred Jesus. We have the incident with Thomas. Jesus rose with identification marks on his body. That is how Thomas believed. “My master and my God” he says. He is the first person in this book to look upon Jesus of Nazareth and address the word 'God' to him. This what John has been working towards from the beginning. “In the beginning was the word and the word was God”. What does this mean? What does it look like? Well, said John and off we go through Galilee and Jerusalem. Now a week after Easter it looks like this. A muddled, dogged disciple determined not to be taken in, standing on his rights not to believe anything without solid evidence, is confronted by Jesus who has just walked through a locked door. “My master and my God”. Jesus rose with the identification marks on him.- that is how Thomas believed.. These wound marks were more than identification marks for doubters. They tell us that the sufferings of this world are echoed in the heart of God. Tragedies and unfair suffering happen daily in our world. If we have no sight of the scarred, marred and risen Christ, then we have no light at all for the dark places of our earthly pilgrimage.

Paul writes in Corinthians *“If we have hoped in Christ in his earthly life, only as the man of Nazareth and not also in his resurrected life, we are of all men most pitiable”* No one knew this better than the disciples in the bolted room and again later, which is why *“When they saw the (risen) Lord they were glad”*

Read pray or sing StF 351 - In Christ alone [StF 351 In Christ alone \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StF351)

- 1 In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.
- 2 In Christ alone! -- who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.
- 3 There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain;
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine --
bought with the precious blood of Christ.
- 4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!
Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

Prayers for Others

I suggest that after each paragraph, you pause and if you know any people to whom this applies, then put their names in your prayers and pause to pray for them
Lord Jesus Christ

you gave of yourself without counting the cost
offering even your own life for the life of the world
So now we pray for all those
who seek to love you in return,
however hesitant or partial their love might be
Inspire them through your love

We pray for those new in their faith,
still learning more of you,
uncertain perhaps of their commitment,
still discovering more of your love.
Keep their love always growing.

We pray for those established in their faith,
facing the daily risk of growing complacent, stale,
settled into a comfortable routine.
Make their love ever fresh.

We pray for those whose faith has crumbled,
no longer holding the trust they once held,
no longer feeling you close by their sides,
no longer seeking to follow Christ.
Renew their love

We pray for those who have never had faith,
those unmoved by the message of the Gospel,
those who resist its challenge, despite themselves,
and those who wilfully go against your will.
Kindle a love for you in their hearts

We pray for those whose faith is costly,
those who sacrifice time, money and energy,
security, health and even life itself,
in the service of others Reward their love

We pray finally Lord for those who need something
to put their faith in.
the poor, the hungry and the homeless,
the sick, the suffering, the bereaved,
those broken by the tragedies and crises of life.
May they experience the fullness of your love

Finally Lord Jesus
your love is for all wherever they may be.
May it reach out then into every heart in every place,
and may we be part of that,
learning to love you as you love us. Amen

Read pray or sing StF 347 - Crown him with many crowns
[Hymn: Crown Him with many crowns \(StF 347\)](#)
[\(youtube.com\)](#)

1 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the Son of God,
before the worlds began;
and ye who tread where he has trod,
crown him the Son of Man,
who every grief has known
that wrings the human breast,
and takes and bears them for his own,
that all in him may rest.

3 Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
who died, and rose on high;
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives, that death may die.

4 Crown him the Lord of peace,
whose power a sceptre sways
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
absorbed in prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end,
and round his pierced feet
fair flowers of paradise extend
their fragrance ever sweet.

5 Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side --
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail
throughout eternity.

Matthew Bridges (1800-1894) and Godfrey Thring (1823-1903)

Blessing

Go now
with laughter in your eyes
a smile on your lips
a song in your heart
and merriment in your soul
and share the joy that Christ has given you
Amen

Acknowledgements: Prayers and Meditation from books by Nick
Fawcett
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