



Worship for Sunday 2nd May

Good morning and welcome to our service on this the 5th Sunday of Easter. Welcome, it is lovely to have you with us as we gather to worship our loving God. Let us take a moment to still ourselves in the presence of God so that we are ready for worship this morning.

Call to worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**
The lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia hearts to heave and voices raise

Almighty God, your son has opened for us a new way into your presence. Give us new hearts and constant wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; though Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayers of Penitence

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith. *Silence.*

Like Mary at the empty tomb, we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**
Like the disciples behind closed doors, we are afraid to be seen as your disciples.
Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**
Like Thomas in the upper room, we are slow to believe.
Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Collect for the 5th Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

Reading: Acts 8: 26-end

Hymn: Now the green blade rises

Reading: 1 John 4: 7-11

Reflection

Below is a reflection on 1 John 4: 7-11 by Eddie Askew taken from his Book 'Breaking the Rule – Meditations and Prayers by Eddie Askew' Published by The Leprosy Mission International 1992

I'm a collector. I love and respect old things. Antiques, old paintings, antiquarian books. From time to time, I get lists of old books for sale, send to me by antiquarian booksellers. The format is always the same. Each book is listed by the author, then come the title, the date of the particular edition, and then anything else that's relevant. The size of the binding, and so on.

Booksellers have their own jargon of course, and all this is written in abbreviation. Quite often, at the end of a short description of a particular book, you'll see the letter WAF. They stand for "with all faults". When you see this, you know that the dealer is warning you that the book is imperfect. It has faults. Perhaps some pages are missing, or it has suffered significant damage. He has found some faults but he thinks there may be more. If you really want the book, you have to accept it as it is.

I like to think that's the way God loves us. With all faults. And that, in spite of our faults, he's still prepared to accept us as we are, "buy" us, redeem us, God doesn't demand perfection before he loves us. He loves us as we are, with all faults.

Someone said, "There is nothing that we can say or do to make God love us more than he already does."

That's important. He accepts us as we are. Having accepted us, he then begins to work with us, renewing, repairing, recreating us and our lives, but that's nothing to do with how he loves us. And, when you think about it, it has to be that way, because if God loved us more the better we become, it would imply that God loves some people more and other people less. And that' can't be true.

It would also mean that we could earn God's love and, again, that's not on. Love is his free gift, and he gives it to us as we are, with all our faults.

If that's the way God loves us, then maybe that's the way we ought to love each other.

Lord, the promise of your love makes me uncomfortable. Somehow, I'd rather earn it, than takes it as a gift. Present that, through my own hard work i.ve done something to deserve it.

To think that you should love me as I am, with all faults, not strings attached, doesn't seem to quite right. I'd rather pile up brownie points, work my way towards the goal, and feel I've been successful, won the prize.

But when I look inside myself, dig down a bit, I find it's pride that's talking. A pride that doesn't want to take your gift of love, or any other gift, for free. Rather stone on my own two feet, self-made.

And then I realise that even when I feel like this, inclined to turn my back, go my own way, your love's still there. Over me and under me. Before me and behind me. Around me and within me. Your love encompassing.

The generosity is overwhelming. I find it hard to understand - I'm still wriggling, Lord - hard to understand why you should offer it at all. Until I realise it isn't just an act of love that takes me as I am. Love is your nature. You are love, and love can do not other. Love can only Love.

And when I look afresh at who I am, and how I live, I feel the secret's not to try to understand the mystery of love but simply to relax in it. Relax in you, and let the tide of love flow in with Joy. The joy of knowing that, with all my faults, you treasure me.

Creed

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

Hymn: I the lord of sea and sky

Prayers

I have made a video of the prayers.

Let us pray trustfully to the God who has loved us into being and cherished us all our life.

Loving God, guide your Church into ways of spiritual beauty and gracious wisdom. May your word be spoken out with passion and heard with humility and joy. We pray for our Archbishops Justin and Stephen, Bishops Rachel and Robert, for all church leaders and congregations, guide and strength your church so that we may shine out with your love and compassion. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, may justice and righteousness flourish in this neighbourhood, this country, this world. Bless those who work to right what is wrong and mediate where there is conflict. Rise up leaders who are happy to serve and protect them from power's corruption. May the world work together to protect the environment and the vulnerable. We pray for all those affected by the coronavirus especially the sick and the bereaved, those who work in medical care, for hospitals struggling to cope, for all those struggling with their mental health and well being and for all dealing with the economic impact. Show us ways in which we can help make the world a better place and give us the courage to act. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we thank you for the nurturing we have received and for our families and friends. We pray for children and young people as they grow and for all those with the responsibility to care and nurture them, remembering especially families, schools and playgroups. We pray for our local community for all homes and families and for all who work here, may kindness and understanding be the hall marks of our common life together. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, give comfort and healing to all who are in any kind of need, sorrow or pain. Naming before you any known to us. *Silence.* May they sense your reassuring presence and know that you are there with them always and you love them. We pray for all those who work in the NHS, care and nursing homes and all those who care for loved ones at home, surround them with your love compassion, and the resources they need to care for others as well as for themselves. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for those who have died to this earthly life and now see face to face. We remember your mercy and commit our love ones to the safely of your keeping. We pray for all those who are grieving at this time, may your surround them with your strength, love and hope. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, in a moment of silence and stillness to bring our own prayers and concerns to you. *Silence.* **Merciful Father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Lord's prayer

Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia. The peace of the Lord be always with you, **and also with you.** Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

I know that we are not together physically today and not able to share the peace in our normal way. However, this does not mean that we are not able to share the peace. Bring to mind members of our church family and as you do wish them God's peace. "..... (the name of a member of our church family) God's peace be with you

Hymn: Oh Lord my God

We go out

Keep us, Father in this community of faith, the Church of your Son Jesus Christ, and help us to confess him as Messiah and Lord in all we day and do. We ask this in his name. **Amen**

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and always. Amen
With the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work with in you, go in peace to love and service the Lord.
Alleluia. Alleluia. **Thanks be to God Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Today I would like to leave you with a Sung Blessing – this is a version of ‘Christ within me, Christ before me’; sung by Stuart Townsend

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