

Sermon – All Saints Weston
14th July 2019
“I am the resurrection” John 11: 1-27

Good Morning!

We are on a journey every day of our lives. As disciples we follow:

- Jesus, the “I am”. Through him:
- We are forgiven
- We must go and tell others

That journey sometimes has unexpected turns. That’s OK. The Lord is leading. We follow. Sometimes, when we look back, we see why things happen – we see the nudges

That journey sometimes has unplanned events. Unpredictable things, problems, a sudden loss, or illness. That’s OK. The Lord is with us, to give us strength

That journey sometimes is too difficult. We fall down. We are weak. We give in. That’s OK. We are forgiven. The Lord picks us up, dusts us down, and puts us back on the path.

Amazing grace!

And we are not alone. We share stories to encourage each other. The Lord is with us.

Today:

“I am the resurrection and the life”

This is the 5th (of seven) great “I am sayings” recorded by John.

Jesus knew his plan.

He was going to bring Lazarus back to life to demonstrate the life he was giving.

- Martha recognised and believed
- The disciples were still learning. Their example to us is to follow, even if it seemed hopeless (16)
- And us?

Well, let us hear Paul’s guidance:

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12-20a)

Paul is defending the fact of the resurrection. At the end of this great chapter of Pauline “relentless logic” he says (vs 58) **Therefore stand firm.....**

There is One God
One Lord
One Spirit of truth

One God – creator
One Lord, Jesus Christ, incarnation, born, crucified, arose again, was seen, is alive, for our salvation
One Spirit to guide, remind, the supernatural

To give life and hope in all circumstances

How do we stand firm? The four pillars for our journey are scripture, tradition, reason and experience – of others and ourselves

Scripture – of course. A guide to life. A guide to our relationship with our saviour. I have printed cards for you of some verses important to me... (see appendix 1)

Tradition – There is unity in the one Spirit of Truth – yes (John 4: 23). But remember that the way we praise and pray depends on our mood, culture, location and circumstance. So, there is role for tradition

Reason – well yes. We have just looked a Paul’s use of reason – his “relentless logic”. There is creation – when looked at with eyes of wonder our world and the universe it sits within are surely too extraordinary to have happened by chance. And then there are the facts of history – for example the observation that at Pentecost twelve men spoke with such world changing power 2000 years ago that we are here today

Experience – remember the importance of the encouraging testimony of others. And then our own – it is a good idea to keep a record of those moments when you are suddenly aware of the move / nudges of God, or the overwhelming love of Jesus, or that spine tingle of the Holy Spirit. Reflect, learn, record and value.

So, let’s go back to the journey. “I am the resurrection. Stand firm!”

We have talked about amazing grace. “How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed” as the song goes. We know God’s forgiveness in Jesus name. that I experienced, as an adult, after a mission in 1986 (Keith de Barry) in this church. I was at that moment “born again” to know new life. And this grace is a continual outpouring. There is a useful 16-word mantra:

Come my Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, my saviour; have mercy on me, a sinner

This can be repeated over and over at those times when distracting thoughts can crowd in. Clothe yourselves in Jesus Christ.

How about our attitude on the journey? Richard Rohr has described three behaviours:

- Keep learning
- Keep humble
- Keep living in wonder

Why do we journey? It is our life. We are disciples of Jesus. Jesus has:

- opened the way to God
- told us to tell others – all nations / all people
- promised to be with us

What are the building blocks to help us stand firm? There are three for me – unity, compassion and the power of prayer.

- Unity – yes there is One Spirit of Truth, and this leads to unity not uniformity. So, let us celebrate this diversity. Increase dialogue. Increase understanding. Why do others worship in that way? Seek this togetherness. I often say at the university that all those who believe and trust in Jesus Christ are camped on the same hill. I heard a sermon in Stornoway – we were visiting the site of the 1949 Lewis revival – when the preacher said “yes we can build our churches, but let us make the walls around low enough so we can shake hands over them”. Jesus prayed that all believers may be one, and live so that world might believe you sent me (John 17: 20-21)
- Compassion – the Lord is reaching out to all people. Through our hands. Remember the power of prayer, and the importance of sacraments. It is wrong to deny the sacraments to others who are seeking. Jesus says “do this in remembrance of me”. Let us not impede the work of the Holy Spirit, overflowing this is continual. There is never a full stop. Look at Paul’s comma in Romans 15: 13 “, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit”. We are a part of that
- The power of Prayer. Prayer changes things

So

- Jesus is the resurrection
- We are forgiven. We have life. We have hope in all circumstances. Let us stand firm
- As his disciples, we live on the way, to join him, to be part of his salvation, to live that others may believe

Let us sing as we sit:

God forgave my sin in Jesus name, I’ve been born again in Jesus name
And in Jesus name I come to you to share his love as he told me to. He said:
Freely, freely you have received, freely, freely give
Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live
All power is given in Jesus name, in earth and heaven in Jesus name
And in Jesus name I come to you, to share his power has he told me to. He said
Freely....

Prayer: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit

Nigel Rawlinson

On his last day at All Saints Weston

14th July 2019

Appendix 1

The “I am” promises of Jesus

Each one is a description, and then asks for an action (by us) and describes the consequence (Jesus’s gift)

John 6: 35: The bread of life – come to me – never go hungry

John 8: 12: The light – follow – never walk in darkness

John 10: 9: The gate – enter – be saved, come in (for sanctuary), and go out to find pasture (i.e. work)

John 10: 11,14 The good shepherd - listen – there shall be one flock, and one shepherd

John 11: 25: The resurrection and life – believe - live

John 14: 6 The way the truth and the life - come to me – come to the Father

John 15: 5: The vine and you are the branches – remain in me – you will bear much fruit

Jesus says “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
I am gentle and humble at heart and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11: 28,29)

Humble yourselves under God’s mighty hand. Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you
(1 Peter 5: 6,7)

May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him,
so that you might overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

Be encouraged....