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EASTER 3

26th April 2020

A short act of worship for use in peoples homes
while churches are closed.

A free resource funded by **twelve**baskets.

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Prayer

I am here, Lord.
I am here to worship you, I am here to pray.
I am here to sing your praises and to weep with you.
I am here, Lord.
Uncertain, living with lockdown and afraid,
But I am here.

Come Lord Jesus,
Amen.¹

Hymn

548 STF – Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine - [YouTube](#)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

¹ Opening prayers by Tim Baker

Prayers

Here we are Lord, present to you, in the midst of confusing news stories and national lockdown.

We are here, amongst fear and doubt, amongst busy key-workers and worried furloughed-workers.

We are here, amongst quiet streets and busy hospitals.

We are here, not sure what the future will hold, waiting for the next announcement, praying for the wider world where coronavirus will be far more damaging than it might be here.

Amongst all this uncertainty, we turn to you, Lord God, for that blessed assurance.

Come to us; abide with us, risen and holy God.

Amen.²

We say the Lord's Prayer

Readings: 1 Peter 1:17-23 - [Click for Reading](#)

Luke 24:13-35 - [Click for Reading](#)

Reflections on the readings

Today's gospel reading, the story of Cleopas and his companion on the Emmaus Road, is one of encounter.

The two disciples, fleeing all that was agonising and painful about the events in Jerusalem, including Jesus' death...they meet a stranger on the road. A stranger who seems oblivious to what has gone on, but seems incredibly well-versed in the scriptures and to have a particularly interesting (and possibly quite radical?) take on how they can be interpreted. He talks to them all the way to the house, and is eventually invited in as a guest.

It is only then, as they break bread together, that the recognition dawns.

This is the Christ.

Jesus, somehow, miraculously, back from the dead.

And as they grasp this truth, he is gone...

Wow – it's quite a story! We go on this roller-coaster of emotions. The premise of the story – meeting someone on the road and inviting them back to your house – is not something we can do at the moment, in the midst of the Coronavirus lockdown.

However, the story has lots of encouragement for us as we reflect on what it means to be disciples of Jesus in this strangest of all Easter seasons...

² Prayers by Tim Baker

Firstly, in verse 21, where Cleopas reflects on the sadness of Jesus' death – 'we had hoped that he was the one'.

We had hoped.

That seems like a powerful phrase to summarise how lockdown and the affects of Coronavirus have affected many of us.

Perhaps we have already lost loved ones to the virus, and 'had hoped' for so much more – for longer with them, to be able to be with them at the end, to be able to attend their funeral and throw a party at the end.

We are dealing with the grief of 'we had hoped'.

Perhaps we had made plans for April, or May, or for the summer, which have now been thrown into jeopardy by the virus. We were looking forward to an exciting moment or holiday, we were planning to see family and friends, we were attending events or festivals or gatherings that are usually a key part of our yearly rhythms. We had hoped for so much more.

Perhaps we have found the change to our rhythms and patterns deeply disturbing and are struggling to balance the new demands on our time and energy.

We had hoped for so much more.

We know the pain of the grieving disciples as they walk the weary road.

And yet, Jesus comes into their midst.

This is the great joy of the resurrection stories in the gospels – they all point us towards being a people of hope. We cannot always be happy, we cannot always rejoice, we may need to grieve...but we do not grieve as a people without hope.

Rather, we look for the encounter with Jesus, even in the midst of pain and anguish. Even amongst broken dreams and lost hopes, we look for the stranger who joins us on the road of life's journey.

He is there, beside us. Telling stories, breaking bread, sharing love and grace.

These dark and difficult times are the hardest ones in which to recognise the stranger. I often wonder if Cleopas and his companion even looked up to see Jesus whilst they were on the road with him. Perhaps they walked with the weight of grief, looking down, perhaps with their hoods up over their heads, not even looking at this man who walked with them.

Wherever you are today, on your journey. However you feel about the 'hopes' you have lost, Jesus wants to come and sit and eat with you.

Will you make him welcome?³

³ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Prayers of intercession

As we gather here in worship we gather before the ultimate creator and in this moment of quiet we reflect on our world.

[Pause]

As we wonder at your creation we cannot help but see that through our actions and inactions, our desires and our greed we have caused our world to hurt, for that God, we are sorry.

We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, your love endures forever.

Forgive us for the times this week where we have not thought the things you would have us think, have not said the words you would have us say and have not acted in the way you would have us act. In our moments of humanity where we have fallen short we ask for your mercy.

Help us to see the world the way you see it, to recognise your creative, loving hand amidst all the uncertainty, pain and grief and help us to walk this Earth in a way that shines your light in to the lives of all who we meet.

We give thanks to you Lord, for you are good, your love endures forever.

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

545 STF – Be Thou My Vision - [YouTube](#)

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Be all else, but naught to me, save that thou art
Be thou my best thought in the day and by night;
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord.
Be thou my great Father; thy child let me be,
Be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower,
O raise thou me heavenward, great power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:

Be thou mine inheritance now and always:

Be thou and thou only the first in my heart:

O sovereign of heaven my treasure thou art.

⁴ Prayers of intercession adapted from those written by Lauren Brabbs

High King of heaven, thou heavens bright sun:
O, grant me its joys after vict'ry is won:
Great heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, o ruler of all.

Blessing

Jesus comes, he comes amongst us, even as we seek him in our homes and our self-isolation.

Jesus comes today, breaks bread with us,
Wishes us peace,
And transforms us by his love.

Jesus comes.
Come Lord Jesus.

Amen.⁵

⁵ Additional prayers by Tim Baker