



The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale



“He is Risen!”

‘Church in the Home’

Edition 8

Sunday May 10th – Saturday May 16th

From the Vicarage

As we remember the celebrations of VE day this weekend the words of Winston Churchill will be heard once more. *God bless you all. Everyone, man or woman has done their best. Everyone has tried.*

Victory was won by everyone. It was a collective effort on all fronts and never before had the civilian been so involved. We are constantly being reminded from the media and our government, that if this current challenge that we are facing is to be beaten, then it requires the continued resolve and efforts of us all. As we remember the sacrifice of the past it is right that we continue to remember those who are sacrificing so much right now and for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

Out of the loss and destruction of the war came a resolve to create something new and better for the future. I can remember my grandparents telling me of the hopes they held and worked for – one of them being the creation of the NHS, a blessing that we are still so grateful for. In last week’s reflection, I commented upon the way that the early church were filled with love, joy and power as they lived their lives in relationship with a risen Jesus and the reality of the Holy Spirit gifting them and filling them with power. A new life had begun for them. Things were never to be the same. They were facing a new normal. That longing for things to ‘*return to normal*’ is, understandably, heard a great deal at the moment and is usually associated with wanting things to return to how they were before all of this began. A return to the familiar and the ordinary. But what if we decide that we don’t want to return to that situation? I’d like to suggest something else to you. God isn’t interested in us going back to anything other than Him. God’s normal is never a thing of the past, it’s always something that he is interested in taking us *into*. God has a normal and it’s very different to ours. It’s not new to him but it is to us because it’s so very different to what we’ve experienced so far, no matter if we’ve been walking in faith for decades or just exploring the reality of that experience now. Living life with God is, however, meant to be normal. That’s how it was planned in the beginning, but mankind decided to head off in a different direction.

God cannot bring about change in our lives or in his church, if we insist on holding onto the past. A new life with Him begins when we decide we need to change the ordinary and move into the extraordinary by living life with Him through Jesus. Adventure awaits .. are we ready and willing?

Here is a truth. Our lives are currently fundamentally affected by something we cannot see but can experience is there. We see the results of it. It is an unseen reality.

Our lives were intended to be fundamentally affected by someone we cannot currently see but can experience is there. We see the results of it. It is an unseen reality. God loves us and invites us into a new life with him. It’s something we can experience every day just like the early church. May we always be willing to seek out and to experience God’s normal for our lives. Amen.

Rev. Dave.



In Christ alone/ Cornerstone/Solid Rock

Music from
Terri

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qmN0kfNGcME>

Our readings this week teach of Christ as the cornerstone of our lives, the message is that we need to trust and obey, to strive to walk in his likeness. He is the solid rock on which we stand and we are his chosen people who have received his mercy. These songs mixed together fit perfectly with the message.

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

Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong, in the savior's love
Through the storm, he is Lord
Lord of all

When darkness seems to hide his face
I rest on his unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
My anchor holds within the veil

Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong, in the savior's love
Through the storm, he is Lord
Lord of all

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand

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
'Til he returns or calls me home
Christ alone, cornerstone
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Trust and Obey – Don Moen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fiw9IKa8SbY>

Forgiveness is one of the hardest teachings to live by, it is often the opposite of how we may feel. Like Stephen, in one of today's readings, we all need to emulate Jesus, to try our best to walk in his likeness. Stephen cries out to God "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." He had learnt to trust and obey the teachings of Jesus, he, as Jesus did on the cross, asked for God's forgiveness of those that would condemn him. Likewise we can receive God's peace when we give up the burdens of bitterness and resentment of those that we perceive have wronged us. Trust and obey, give it all up to Christ is what we need to practise to be free from doubt and fear.

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,
But His smile quickly drives it away;
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet.
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.

What He says we will do, where He sends we will go;
Never fear, only trust and obey.

Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust...



Sunday May 10th Bible Readings:

Acts 7:55-60, 1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

Click on this site, type in the reading you want and then listen to David Suchet read it to you.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Gen.1>

Reflection

Our lives have changed considerably over the past weeks. Routines we thought were permanent have gone and we are settling into new ways. I have noticed that without the constant traffic on the roads the sounds of nature are heard more clearly. Perhaps we have found time to take up a new hobby or learn a new skill that we never got round to before.

Stephen, in our reading today saw things from a different perspective. The passage of scripture for today from the book of Acts, tells us of the ending of Stephens life. Stephen is described as a man full of the Holy Spirit and we read that he was looking into heaven and saw the Son of Man standing at Gods right hand. How was it that Stephen came to be in such a position and meet with such a cruel death as stoning? Stephen's story starts in the previous chapter where he is described as a man full of God's grace and power, full of faith and one who performed great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. He is one of the seven disciples chosen to serve tables, to distribute food to the needy. Opposition arose from members of the Synagogue, who began to argue with Stephen, but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke. The Jewish leaders resorted to force and arrested him.

When the High Priest asked if the charges made against him were correct, Stephen spoke up and reminded them all of their history as Jewish people. He mentioned Abraham, Joseph, Moses and through to the prophets. He described these patriarchs as being ready to hear and obey God's call on their lives and to move out of their comfort zone as God directed them, not knowing what was coming, but willing to trust God to lead them. Stephen could see that a new life with Jesus meant freedom and reliance on the Holy Spirit, whereas most of the Jews were set in their ways and wanted their customs to stay the same as they always had been. He is quite blunt when he calls the leadership 'stiff necked' and says that they have rebelled against God and limited God and have now murdered the Son of God. No wonder the Jews were furious towards him. None of us like being told how set in our ways we are.

Today's reading begins where the Jewish leaders are infuriated with Stephens argument against them, but the fact that Stephen speaks of seeing Jesus at the right hand of God is regarded as blasphemy, for which the penalty in the Old Testament is stoning. Stephen isn't looking at the angry faces of his accusers, he is looking to God and sees the glory of God and Jesus standing by God. Stephen tells the Jews - Look I see heaven opened-. This compounds their rage and they set about stoning him. What courage Stephen had. With his eyes on Jesus, his Lord and Saviour, he asks God to receive his spirit and to forgive his opponents. Only one other name is mentioned in this passage and that is Saul. Perhaps if Saul had not witnessed the godliness of Stephen and his courage and forgiveness, he might not have been willing to turn to God later on the Damascus road where he has his own very personal encounter with Jesus. Stephen is saying that the Jews throughout the previous centuries had been disobedient to God. The patriarchs were each men of faith and hope with a spirit of adventure, willing to follow God even though they did not know where God was leading them. Perhaps this time in our lives is an opportunity to take stock of our lives and see more clearly where God is leading us, both individually and as the body of Christ in the Upper Dale. Although this story took place 2000 years ago, Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever. In the reading from John's gospel Jesus is speaking to the disciples and tells them- 'I am going to prepare a place for you' - So just as Stephen could see beyond all that men could do to him and see the welcome of the Lord Jesus Christ, this is what Jesus promises for us as well. Jesus says - 'There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you, so that you will be with me where I am.'

During this pandemic many are facing sickness and death but death for the Christian is not to be feared because Jesus will welcome us into His eternal home. Stephen was surrounded by Jews who didn't have the same love for Jesus that he had. Perhaps he felt alone and out of his comfort zone, wondering what it would lead to, just as we are at this time. But God is always faithful and the seed that Stephen sowed in his message and life and death, bore fruit in future generations. So will the seed we are sowing now in our lockdown -seeds not in our gardens but in our hearts and lives. Seeds of the Spirit, of love, joy and peace that don't come from outward circumstances, but are an inner capacity to respond to Gods love which is always with us.

Margaret Iveson

Prayers



`Do not fear what might happen tomorrow. The same everlasting Father who cares for you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day`

Frances de Salles

Loving Father, we come into your presence just as we are with our hopes, anxieties and fears. Help us to trust in your unfailing love. Help us to listen to your voice and rest in your presence.

As we continue to try to manage the spread of coronavirus help us to put others before ourselves so that we do what is necessary for the common good.

Lord Jesus, there are many dark places in the world where help is not always available and crowded conditions make the present situation worse. As we care for each other in our community help us to remain aware of this situation and help us to pray for all those who have little hope. May those in authority do whatever is necessary to help to alleviate distress however distant the countries so that we truly know that we are all one.

Everlasting Father, we give thanks for the wonderful community in which we live, for the friendship and help so freely available.

We give thanks for all keyworkers , not only those in the frontline of nursing but all those who work to make our community thrive ; drivers , refuse collectors, shop owners, farmers, postmen and postal workers, social workers , carers, the list is endless.

We pray for our vicar who is working hard to keep the church in the Upper Dale alive ;making sure God`s message is heard and that all those in need are nurtured.

We pray for all those stricken with the virus and for all residents of Care Homes. In particular we remember the residents of Sycamore Hall. We pray for the bereaved. Lord, comfort them in their sorrow.

Wherever we are we pray in silence for those known to us who need our prayers.

Whatever fears we have help us to pause, look up and give thanks for the simple truth that we are here to worship together.

` The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and grant us peace` (Numbers 6 v 24) **MaryRose Kearney**

Merciful Father; accept these prayers, for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Visit our Website for more information, resources and messages www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk



Many of you are finding this new resource from the church very helpful



DAILY HOPE

“The Daily Hope service will allow people to hear hymns, prayers and words that offer comfort and hope” Archbishop Justin Welby

Worship, prayer, hymns and reflections on your **telephone**

24hrs a day – 7 days a week – call: 0800 804 8044



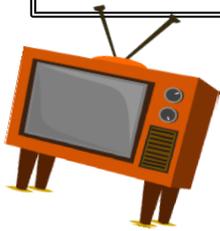
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Sunday May 10th
10:30am
Morning Prayer



To view this Sunday's service:
Visit the website:
www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk

**TV
Radio**



Worship on the BBC:

Tune into some of the services on TV and Radio.

Sunday: Radio 4 Sunday Worship 8:10 – 8:50am with Dr Rowan Williams

Sunday: Radio 3 Choral Evensong 3:00 – 4pm from Tewkesbury Abbey

Wednesday: Choral Evensong 3:30 – 4:30pm

Sunday BBC1 Worship 10:45 – 11:15 VE day service. Bishop of Dover

Songs of Praise 1:15 – 1:50 Katherine Jenkins

Just a little thought:



‘Worrying doesn’t take away tomorrow’s troubles but it does steal today’s peace.’

Cast your burden upon the Lord ... Psalm 55