**SUNDAY SERVICE MAY 24th 2020**







ST MICHAEL’S CHURCH HOOLE

**KNOWING THE POWER OF THE KING**

***“I pray that –you may know His incomparable power for us who believe”***

*Ephesians 1: v 18-19.*

**Welcome to our Sunday Service at this Ascension tide when we recall and celebrate the Risen Jesus returning to His Father before sending His Spirit to be with us for ever.**

**We are also in the middle of the 10 days of Thy Kingdom Come which is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray between Ascension Day (21 May) and Pentecost (31 May) for more people to come to know Jesus. You will find prayer resources on our website to help you join in this great wave of prayer across our world that many people will come to know the Lord Jesus for themselves.**

**HYMN:** Our first hymn is a great hymn of praise to our Ascended Lord - Jesus Christ the King of Kings: **Crown him with many crowns the lamb upon his throne:**

[https://youtu.be/Kc3UnhPHTOo](about:blank)

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.  
  
  
Crown him the Lord of love!  
  Behold his hands and side,--  
Rich wounds, yet visible above,  
  In beauty glorified:  
No angel in the sky  
  Can fully bear that sight,  
But downward bends his burning eye  
  At mysteries so bright!  
  
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.  
  
Crown him the Lord of years!  
  The Potentate of time,--  
Creator of the rolling spheres,  
  Ineffably sublime!  
Glassed in a sea of light,  
  Where everlasting waves  
Reflect his throne,--the Infinite!  
  Who lives,--and loves--and saves.

For forty days we have been celebrating with joyful hearts the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his bursting from the tomb and his defeat of the power of sin and death.

He appeared to his disciples many times and told them about the kingdom of God. At Ascension tide we recall how he left this earth and returned to his Father, ascending into heaven to take his throne over all dominions and powers.

**Let us pray:**

**PRAYER OF THE WEEK:**

**Almighty God, your ascended Son has sent us into the world**

**to preach the good news of your kingdom:**

**inspire us with your Spirit**

**and fill our hearts with the fire of your love,**

**that all who hear your Word**

**may be drawn to you,**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**READING Ephesians 1: v 15-end.**

Thanksgiving and Prayer

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spiritof wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

**HYMN: King of Kings :**

[https://youtu.be/HGnpfYqwO8k](about:blank)

King of kings, Majesty  
God of Heaven living in me  
Gentle Saviour, closest friend  
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end  
All within me falls at Your throne

*Your Majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty*

Earth and Heaven worship You  
Love eternal, Faithful and True  
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls  
Brought this sinner near to Your throne  
All within me cries out in praise.

*Your majesty, I can but bow*

**SERMON**: **KNOWING THE POWER OF THE KING**

Let us pray

Lord God we pray that we may know the hope to which you have called us and your incomparably great power for us who believe. Amen

In our new less polluted skies have you noticed how much further you can see than before? And if you take a telescope the result is mind blowing- you see tiny details, a bird’s wings or the markings of a ship at sea that you couldn’t possibly see unaided and things come into view you didn't even realise were there- the house on the horizon, the train in the distance. The power of prayer is like that, like a telescope that enables us to see reality in an entirely new perspective and catch sight of things we did not even know were part of our world.

At the beginning of this great letter to Christians in Ephesus Paul has reminded his readers of the amazing spiritual blessings they have in Christ -their redemption through the blood of Christ and the forgiveness of sins. Here in these verses he shows them by example how to tap the power of God and the riches of their glorious inheritance and the answer is- by prayer.

So he prays for these new Christians in Ephesus. And we have a wonderful insight into the prayer life of Paul and a superb lesson about how to pray to help us as we pray during these 10 days of the global wave of prayer which is Thy Kingdom Come:

Paul starts with thanksgiving; not a shopping list of all the things he would like God to do. That’s the first important lesson on prayer for us; start with ‘thank you’ before you move on to ‘please’. So he gives thanks to God for the Christians in the great cosmopolitan port of Ephesus for their faith and love. Make sure that when you pray you say thank you for spiritual as well as physical things for others as well as yourselves. And notice he does it continually. That’s the second lesson for us; we need to keep going in prayer; don’t be afraid to keep saying thank you; that’s the best way of cultivating an attitude of thankfulness.

But thirdly notice what he prays for when he does start asking God for things. Most of us confine our prayers for our loved ones to their health and well being or maybe their job. Paul hardly ever prays about these things for the Christians in his care: he prays for their spiritual life- their relationship with God, their faith and trust in God and their effectiveness as witnesses to the truth.

In these verses Paul mentions the 3 great Christian virtues- faith, hope and love. All 3 are necessary for a full Christian life. He thanks God for the Ephesians’ faith and love but prays for their hope- they need more of that. Most of us talk a lot about faith and love but not enough about hope. Faith reaches into the past and grasps the death and resurrection of Christ. Love reaches into the present and grasps the fellowship of the people of God. But Hope reaches into the future and anchors you to all that is yet to happen. If you only live for what Christ can do for you now, you are missing out on a whole dimension of life. It is the dimension of hope that enables you to think about heaven, to long for heaven, to look forward to heaven which makes a huge difference to the way you live and the way you die.

Hope is the one thing that holds you when life really gets you down and you wonder whether we will ever get over this coronavirus situation. Hope is an anchor which holds you to the future. And so Paul prays for the Ephesians that they will have Hope.

He prays that the eyes of their hearts (what a great phrase!) may be enlightened that they might know the hope to which God has called them, the riches of his glorious inheritance. We are millionaires- the riches God has in store for us make all earthly wealth pale into insignificance. No room for envy here. And for all of us who believe, there is incomparably great power – like no human power however strong; this is the power that raised Jesus from the dead. Just think of all the films you have seen of rockets taking off from NASA , visualise the power of that thrust which can propel a man into space. That is nothing compared to the power of God who brought the dead to life again. No earthly power can do that. The risen Jesus in fact is now enthroned, on the basis of this power of God over the whole cosmos. And at the centre of Paul's prayer for the Church in the area is the longing that they will come to realise that this same power, the power seen at Easter is available to them for their daily use.

Far too many Christians today are quite unaware that this power is there and available. They are like someone who has never looked in a telescope and realised what is out there. The power is really there for Christians to access. That doesn’t mean we can become conjurors and perform spectacular tricks. Many of the things which God’s power achieves in us like putting secret sins to death and becoming people of prayer, may remain hidden from the world. But real it is: Jesus is King -that's the message of Ascension. He is enthroned at the right hand of the Father and He is sovereign over all creation; before Him every knee shall bow.

And wait for it we, the Church, are His body. We are His hands and feet. Here to serve Him in this world but with the power of Almighty God at our disposal in prayer. It's huge. Yet it is the message of the Ascension, the message of this passage and the message of Thy Kingdom Come.

So let us pray individually and together with a new confidence. We have immense power at our disposal as we pray for our family, our friends, and our neighbours to come to know Jesus as their Lord and King.

Let me end with the testimony of Lisa from East London. Hers is one of the many stories you can read about in the Thy kingdom Come resources. She was leaving her church one Sunday evening when she had an encounter that changed the way she shared her faith. She describes it like this. “An elderly man, whom I have never met before, came up to me and said “You’re going to Heaven because someone cared enough to tell you about Christ. Who have you cared enough to tell? Who are you taking to Heaven with you?” I was a little stunned because of his directness. I had never met him and yet he looked me in the eye as if he knew me. I looked around, wondering if he meant to ask someone else. In the pregnant pause it took me to respond, he was gone. I saw him walk into the crowd and have never seen him again. She goes on to say:

Until that moment I had ignored messages from the pulpit about sharing my faith. I had always thought that just seeing the way that I live my life, that friends and family would become Christians. But who was I kidding? Over the days and months after the encounter with the old man, I could not shrug off the thought that I needed to share my faith more openly with my non-Christian friends and family and I needed to start praying for them to come to faith.

### A mugful of love



Now I do. By my bedside I have lollipop sticks with people’s names written on and every I randomly select a stick and pray. I started off with 5 people and it has grown from there.

I encourage you to write down the names of five people. People you love and care about. They may be friends, family, or people you work with. And pray for them every day that they too may come to know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, their Friend and their King

**HYMN: What a friend we have in Jesus**

**https://youtu.be/4XRmGEbH0qs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | What a Friend we have in Jesus,   All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry   Everything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit,   O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry   Everything to God in prayer! |
| 2 | Have we trials and temptations?   Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged,   Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful   Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness,   Take it to the Lord in prayer. |
| 3 | Are we weak and heavy-laden,   Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Saviour, still our refuge—   Take it to the Lord in prayer; Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?   Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He’ll take and shield thee,   Thou wilt find a solace there. |

**PRAYERS:**

God of glory, as we rejoice in the global wave of prayer Thy Kingdom Come, we ask that the whole world may one day come to know you and give you all honour and praise as befits your glory.

Help us to pray faithfully for people we know that they may come to know the joy of your salvation for themselves. A moment of silence now as we name before God those who he has called us to pray for.

Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer

As we all continue to struggle with this pandemic that threatens us, let us take courage from the understanding that God’s glory is so often revealed in the context of suffering and failure in the eyes of the world. Let us concentrate on that glory as we pray together

Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer

God of glory, at a time when some people are returning to work and schools are considering opening their doors to some pupils, we ask for your care and support for all those who are fearful of both the near and more distant future. Help us to trust in you and listen for your guidance as we take each hesitant step to return to our new world. Fill us to overflowing with ongoing thankfulness both in the sunlight and the storm, for you are with us always

Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer

God of glory, thank you for your love and care for all those in need, for the discarded and the marginalised, for the weak and the vulnerable. We pray for the lonely, the isolated, for those waiting for treatment unrelated to the pandemic and for all those suffering from Covid 19. Support them in their troubles, bring healing and reassurance, and touch them and their families with the gentleness of your peace

Lord in your mercy… hear our prayer

God of glory, teach us to understand death in the context of your eternity so our fears may be calmed as we approach it and our loved ones may share that same peace. We thank you for the lives of Mike Redshaw and Manda’s grandmother and pray for their family and friends.

Lord in your mercy…. Hear our prayer

God of glory we thank you that through your Ascension into heaven the way is open for all of us to receive the Holy Spirit. Help us to prepare our hearts each and every day to welcome you and to share the Good News of Jesus with our friends and neighbours.. Amen

We join now in the prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray:

**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**

**HYMN** Our final hymn is one of praise to the Ascended King – Majesty, Worship His Majesty

[https://youtu.be/OaRwD2Y7C0s](about:blank)

Majesty, worship his majesty  
Unto Jesus be all glory, power and praise  
Majesty, kingdom authority flow from his throne  
Unto his own his anthem raise  
So exalt lift up on high the name of Jesus  
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the king  
Majesty, worship his majesty  
Jesus who died now glorified  
King of all kings.

**BLESSING**

May the Love of the Ascended Lord Jesus draw you to Himself

May the Power of the Ascended Lord Jesus strengthen you to serve Him

And may the Joy of the Ascended Lord Jesus fill your hearts

And so may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and all those whom you love, now and for ever more. Amen

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