

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church
“Staying Connected” 9 – Sunday 17th May 2020

Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way

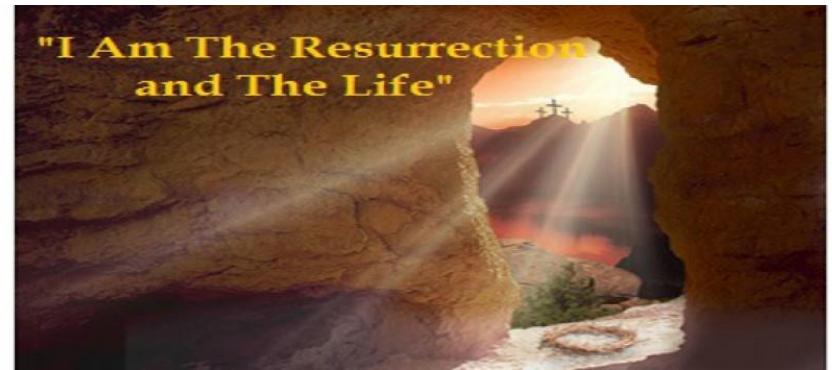
Lord, we commit ourselves once more into Your hands. Take us as we are: with our feelings, our frustrations, our joys and our sorrows; and lead us, bless us and transform us by the power of Your love. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

The fifth of our series on the “I am” sayings of Jesus. This week, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) [I suggest you read the whole passage John 11:1-45] This is another miracle and ‘saying’/explanation at the same time. As we have seen previously, in John’s gospel, the miracles are called ‘signs’. Signs showing us about who Jesus is, and what He means for the world

The raising of Lazarus is different from Jesus’ resurrection not least in the fact that Lazarus would of course die again...

Before the miracle itself we have the famous verse “Jesus wept”: perhaps a combination of lament at the situation and identifying with the sadness, expressed in real feeling and tears. He then proceeds with the miracle.

As we know, no-one is exempt from the heart-ache and very real suffering that is part of this life, with its ups and downs. We can, however, look forward with confidence to the resurrection hope: because Jesus has conquered death itself.. Hallelujah!



Meanwhile, we trust in God’s ongoing, transforming, work in our lives. And we pray for the world: identifying with the pain; and bringing it before God who absorbs it in Himself on the cross. With resurrection to follow.

Our future resurrection hope means we can have fulness of life now. The apostle Paul writes on the implication of the resurrection for us in 1 Corinthians 15, and he closes that chapter with these words:

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”

What does ‘the work of the Lord’ look like for us at this time in lockdown? How can we best serve Him? Well, it will be different for each of us of course, depending on our circumstances, but we can ask and continue to pray each day; and show His love and care to others as we are able....

We know that God's care and remit for us and with us is vast and wide. So I thought it might be good to include workers from all walks of life in our prayers. Going through the alphabet with 2 letters each week, so this week 'a' and 'b' – see below. I suppose if we are still locked down when we get to 'x' that could be a problem...!

This week we pray for – ambulance drivers, agriculturalists, accountants..... [think of others] bus drivers, bar workers, bankers..... [others]. Lord God, would you bless those who work in these areas, and their families; bring Your encouragement, and mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus on their lives.

We pray for those living in fear: that Your love would sweep away the fear, and folk would be able to lean on You day by day.

Sovereign Lord, we continue to pray for our Prime Minister and those in government, that you would give them wisdom as they lead us during the ongoing difficult times. We pray for good sense as society tentatively takes some steps out of full lockdown. And we pray for solutions and a breakthrough for those looking for a vaccine...

Compassionate God, we pray for those we know who are sad, or who are grieving and mourning the loss of a loved one. Be close to each one we pray. And even in through the experience of the tears we thank You for the resurrection hope we have; and a future where our sorrow will turn to joy. Comfort us with these things we pray.

We bring our prayers in the name of Jesus our friend and saviour
Amen.

A thought on prayer from the Minister:

Over the years, at times when I have struggled to pray for any reason, I have sometimes found the following helpful (It's sometimes known as 'the Jesus prayer'): repeated slowly several times:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”

I like it for its simplicity.

It would be interesting to hear if you have your own 'helps' on what encourages you to pray...

Worship services on Radio and TV this Sunday include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 10:45am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 1:15pm Songs of Praise

And finally, please do get in touch with me at any time

May God bless you with His peace.

Mike

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Colossians 3:1

“...set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”