

starters for Sunday

Second Sunday of Easter

27 April 2014

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev George Vidits, Minister of Helensburgh: St Andrew's Kirk linked with Rhu and Shandon, for his thoughts on the second Sunday of Easter.

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Quick Guide...

Helping people prepare for reading the Bible in worship can make a real difference. Overcoming nerves, reading in ways suitable to the text, speaking clearly etc.

You may wish to email these three links to the people reading Scripture on Sunday to support them in their involvement in worship: [Managing your nerves](#); [Creative readings](#); [Worship at the Lectern](#)

A Note on Lectionary Readings

This week's Lectionary Readings are like well-tuned instruments of an orchestra all playing in joyful harmony the same magnificent melody of the resurrection.

[Acts 2: 14a, 22-32](#)

This selected passage is part of Peter's sermon at Pentecost; it is his eye witness testimony to the fact of the resurrection (v. 32). It was a powerful, Spirit filled sermon winning three thousand new converts! It is a sermon every preacher should study, says James Montgomery Boice! It is centred on Scripture (Peter quotes from Psalm 16), and on the person of Jesus Christ, and on the fact of the resurrection! Peter brought into contrast all that was known about Jesus of Nazareth the man (v. 22) and all that Scripture, in this case Ps. 16 testified about Him, in conclusion he proclaimed that the two together pointed at the resurrection, of which he and the other apostles were all witnesses! The emphasis here in the text and for us as preachers on this Sunday, the first after Easter, is on bearing witness to the resurrection! Being encouraged by the testimony of Scripture, by our personal knowledge of Jesus and his acts, being empowered by His Spirit, our preaching needs to be bearing witness to the power of the resurrection.

[Psalm 16](#)

This is a Psalm of David, his praise of the faithfulness and the might of God. David is still a refugee, but he already has been promised the kingdom, even though in his present circumstances it seems to be in the distant future, if at all, but David takes God's word as good and as real as if he would sit on the throne already. The Lord has assigned his portion for him, the boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places, and he has delightful inheritance. David's heart is glad, and he is rejoicing in praise, and rests in security even as he is on the run, for he focuses with the whole of his being upon God, who is his only good thing. David is assured that the Lord



will not abandon him even in the grave! He set the Lord always before him, as soldier looks at his officer, musician at the conductor, sailor at the captain, so does the believer set the risen Lord before himself in all circumstances (v. 8).

Psalm 111

This Psalm is a sheer delight in the Lord and in His works. It is an acrostic poem (each line begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet). The psalmist with great artistic ease praises the Lord, and recalls, line by line the whole of the salvation history of his people, saving them from Egypt, commanded them the Passover, provided for them in the Sinai, presented them with the conquest of the Promised Land, made an everlasting covenant with them. In the view of such majestic action, and love from God the wise can just put their trust into the Lord, and worship Him in obedience.

1 Peter 1: 3-9

Peter is overflowing with joy and praise! His letter is a letter of hope. He who denied his Master (Luke 22:54-62) lost all hope when Jesus was crucified. But on Easter morning he ran to the empty tomb, his hope was awakened; and later at the Sea of Galilee he jumped into the water and swam ashore to meet his risen Master before anyone else! He has been given new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Christ! It was a life changing experience to him, as it should be to all of us! So Peter is looking ahead, forward towards that inheritance that now he has through Christ! An inheritance that he never deserved (by the way no inheritance is ever deserved, or earned – it is an inheritance because of the relationship the heir has with the one that leaves the inheritance). It is a sure inheritance that is kept in heaven for every believer; just as every believer is kept safe (shielded) by God's power till reaches heaven. This is the joy of the believer in the present, even if they go through trials and grief. Those challenges just strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ whom they have not seen, but love Him, and have faith in Him.

Peter's words are an outburst of joyful praise and hope! Such praise and joy should describe us on the Sunday after Easter and not the usual quietness that we so often experience.



[John 20: 19-31](#)

John's gospel here gives the account of the events of two evenings, of two appearances of the risen Lord. They are separate, yet they belong together. The second is the consequence of the first.

The risen Jesus appeared to the disciples in the evening of Easter Day, He came to them to fill them with His Peace, to send them out to continue with His ministry, to enable them for the task by His Spirit. The disciples are becoming apostles. They were gathered to Jesus as disciple, however it was always Jesus' purpose for them to send them out to preach the good news, to send them out as apostles (cf. Mark 3: 13-15). Jesus appeared to the disciples for their sake as a group.

A week later Jesus appeared for the sake of one disciple, Thomas. Thomas is not forgotten by the Lord. He is not missed out. Thomas seems to struggle, he is a bit lost. The risen Lord appears for his sake too! Jesus cares for him, as Good Shepherd cares for the one lost sheep. Thomas is just as important to the risen Lord as the rest of his team! How encouraging it is to read this, learn this that the Lord does not forget about the individual in the midst of the congregation! While He has words for the whole group, He also has words for the individual member! He does not forget about the individual, or neglect him/her when they struggle, or feel being lost in the pew, or at home! As Jesus came after Thomas to offer him His Peace and Word of encouragement He comes after us to grant us His Peace and renew our faith.

The risen Lord comes to the disciples in His risen power and risen body! His presence with them is proof He overcame the power of death and of the grave. He is not weak, or feeble, but powerful! Jesus has come to send them out, to commission them to continue with His ministry! The risen Lord offers all that they need for this mission.

- a) **Peace of the Lord.** Jesus greets them in the usual manner: Peace be with you! He says this a second time, but this time it is not a greeting, this time it is His gift to them. Jesus called us not for a quiet, leisurely life, but for an active mission that faces challenges, problems, and various trials. He gives us first of all His Peace to carry out the mission. A true peace over and against fear, and doubt.



- b) **Purpose of the Lord.** The Lord gathered you to Himself that you will be a witness for Him, you will go out to preach the coming of His Kingdom, of sharing His Good News. He never meant us to be armchair theologians, locked up in an upper room, but apostles, people sent out moving about people, taking the Good News to them. As He was sent by the Father to save the world (cf. John 3:17) we are sent with the message of the very same Salvation.
- c) **Power of the Lord.** Jesus does not expect us to do His mission just on our own, relying on our own abilities and strength. He gives us His strength, His power, the Holy Spirit. The mission can be accomplished only through His Spirit. Jesus knew very well Thomas will not be able to fulfil the calling on his own, so He came back for him, to empower him also as He empowered the other disciples.
- d) We are the people of the Resurrection, let us move in the Peace of the Lord to fulfil His Purpose as He enables us by His Power.

Prayers

Collect

Almighty and eternal God,
the strength of those who believe
and the hope of those who doubt,
may we, who have not seen, have faith
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing,
who is alive and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Prayer of Approach and Confession

Almighty God, our Gracious Father, with praise on our lips and adoration in our hearts we worship you for we can come and meet you here Lord in your risen Power! For the sake of your word and according to your eternal will you have accomplished our salvation. Praise, glory, and honour is yours, mighty God for in you and through you we have newness of life.

Sovereign God, we thank you for the realities of Easter as we continue celebrating your victory, realities that transformed life and history. We lift your name on high majestic Lord Jesus for



overcoming evil, for triumphing over death, and conquering the grave. We worship you risen Lord for the new beginning you are offering us, for the forgiveness of our sins, and life everlasting.

Come Lord Jesus, meet us here as you came to your disciples, as they were overjoyed seeing you in their midst, increase our joy, strengthen our faith. Help us to listen to you and hear your voice today.

Forgive us Lord for our feeble faith, and fear that often keeps us locked away from the world, be gracious to us as we battle with our doubts, and lack of enthusiasm to grow in your grace and share your Good News with the world around. We pray that you will break through the locked doors of our minds and hearts today, you will come close to us with your mercy, and as you reveal to us the power and reality of your resurrection you will fill us with your peace and Holy Spirit, enabling us to open up the doors of fear and step out into the world with your peace and love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Loving Lord we praise you and give you thanks that you come to us with PEACE. That you have won peace over your enemies, evil, and the grave. Thank you for giving us your Peace that surpasses all understanding.

We pray that your peace will be the share of everyone in your creation, Lord.

We lift up to you the troubled lands of this world (here the names of countries, nations and conflicts can be named, and silence could be kept...)

We pray for those that are seeking peace of mind, body, or soul today (...)

We bring to you Lord those that dedicated themselves to make peace, and keep the peace (eg. her Majesty the Queen, Her Majesty's Government, Houses of Parliament, the Scottish Parliament, councillors, police force, peace keeping forces, counsellors, etc.)

Grant us, your church, grace Lord not just to proclaim your peace, but giving us wisdom, creativity, love and compassion to live in your peace and share it with your world.

In Jesus' name, hear our prayer. Amen.



Time with Children

Seeing is Believing

Theme: Thomas needed to meet and see the risen Lord in order to believe He rose from the dead, and move on in faith. Sometimes we also need to see in order to believe. The Lord was good to Thomas, and He is good to us, He comes and reveals Himself to encourage us.

Object: a poster image, or projected image of someone the children/congregation know well, but in an unexpected costume. I used the photo of a colleague of mine, wearing the football top of a team people did not expect him to wear.

Begin to reveal the image from bottom to top, and ask the children to guess who the person might be? Keep them guessing as you gradually reveal more and more of the image. Ideally they will not guess the identity of the person. Before the image is completely revealed ask them if they think it is the person who actually is on the photo. Again, ideally they will say, no. Reveal the image to them.

Continue to say: You did not expect that, did you? Why did you find it difficult to believe when I told you who the person was? Now you have seen the person, do you believe it now? Sometimes we need to see something before we believe it.

Tell them the story of Jesus' appearing to Thomas. Finish the story with Jesus' words to Thomas: 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those that have not seen and yet have believed.'

You and I have never seen Jesus in real life with our eyes. The question is, do we believe in Him, even though we never seen Him? Although we cannot see Him with our eyes, but we can see Jesus being at work in the lives of people as they come to faith, as their lives are turned around, as His will is done by individuals and by the church, as His Spirit is moving among us and establishes His Kingdom.

Prayer: Heavenly Father thank you for Jesus. Although we can't see Him with our eyes, but we can know He is real, your Word testifies to Him, we can experience His power among us, and know His saving love. Amen.



Musical Suggestions

With Children

CH4 194	This is the day
CH4 404	I danced in the morning (Lord of the Dance)
CH4 443	He is Lord, he is Lord
CH4 558	Lord, I lift your name on high

With Everyone

CH4 189	Be still for the presence of the Lord
CH4 419	Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son
CH4 422	Christ is alive, and the universe must celebrate
CH4 423	I know that my Redeemer lives
CH4 426	All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord
CH4 432	How often we like Thomas
CH4 433	Haven't you heard the Jesus is risen?
CH4 434	Jesus is risen from the grave
CH4 566	When I receive the peace of Christ
CH4 609	Come, living God, when least expected
Mission Praise 231	Hevenu shalom
Mission Praise 232	His hands were pierced
Mission Praise 266	I cannot tell
The Source 424	O, what a morning
The Source 431	Peace to you
The Source 1494	See what a morning
The Source 2083	There is a hope



Additional Resources

Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Pray Now 2013](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#). [Revealing Love](#) will be available to purchase from November 2013.



Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music magazine [Different Voices](#).

Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and

delivering sermons regularly.

Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Worship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to the Rev George Vidits for providing us with this Sunday's material.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

