

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 7th February 2021

Wonderful hope – sorrow to joy

Opening Prayer:

Let us begin our worship with a short prayer.

Our Lord and Father we come to you to worship you and the Lord Jesus and to learn from your word and draw near to you. Help us then in our time of worship to put aside all unnecessary thoughts from our everyday life and concentrate on the Lord Jesus and his words and deeds.

Our first song reminds us of who Jesus is.

Song: 790. You are the King of glory

https://youtu.be/MiXfvEA_Ysg

Let us pray.

Lord we are so glad to be in your presence again today. We ask that you will reveal more of yourself to us in our little service. You are so great, the creator of all things and we rejoice to place ourselves in your loving care. We pray for all who are receiving and using this little email service and we join with them in worship.

Lord we will be remembering the Lord Jesus and what he has done for us. Encourage us as we do so we pray. There will be many things on our minds today so help us to bring them into your presence and see them in your light and be filled with hope from you.

Amen.

Intercessory Prayers:

We pause for others to add their prayers.

Song: 828. Filled with compassion for all creation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VA16UVgh7g>

Today we are remembering in bread and wine the body and blood of Jesus and we will also remember His death and resurrection.

The thought that has been on my mind this week is the tremendous sense of loss the disciples and all close to Jesus felt at that time and the amazing joy when they saw the living Lord Jesus after His resurrection. Perhaps this will mean something special to all of us as we remember that they did not know what God was doing until they saw Jesus again. We may feel that we do not understand so much of recent events but we are encouraged to look to the Lord who will see us through everything.

We will read some scripture from Luke's Gospel. Jesus and his disciples are having a special meal together to celebrate Passover when Jesus does something quite unusual. It is something we have copied ever since.

Luke 22:19-23

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ²¹ But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. ²² The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!" ²³ They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Jesus had told them that he would die but they have paid little attention to it in the past. This time, as we read the gospels, we see that they now know that they have come to the crisis point. They are very disturbed by what Jesus has said and we see in the following events things happening that dash all their hopes.

For Jesus this is a crisis point too, but he knows and understands what is happening. As we read his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane we get a glimpse of what it cost him.

Luke 22:39-48

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹ He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴ And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

⁴⁵ When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. ⁴⁶ “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

Here we see the pain and agony of Jesus and also what must have been his deep disappointment in Judas Iscariot.

The disciples must have been deeply confused and disappointed. They were soon to be completely demoralised. All their hopes seemed to have vanished. They were frightened and soon most of them would be more or less in hiding.

Some of the women would soon be thinking of giving Jesus a decent burial.

It is a picture of people with all their hopes dashed.

I hope none of us feel like that but we all face disappointments and confusing or discouraging situations so let us see how things turned out.

When the Sabbath was over, and they were allowed to work, some of the women who followed Jesus closely went to embalm his body. They were to have an unbelievable surprise and we can read about it.

Luke 24:1-12

24 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

It is very hard not to sympathise with the disciples when the women gave them their news. Nobody expects to hear that someone they saw die is now alive; but they had a treat in store.

John 20:19-23

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

I love the old King James version here. It says, "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the lord." It is such delicious understatement.

All their sorrow turned to Joy and what wonderful hope they had as they discovered more and more of what it all meant.

A later writer in the New Testament tells us that because Jesus experienced all these things and many others he is able to help us in our times of need. I think that Jesus is with all his followers and in a sense is experiencing things with us. It is a very precious thought to help us through each day.

We are shortly to have communion so I have chosen this next hymn to help lead us into the communion.

Song 673. There is a Redeemer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_YM_hYzcPo

Communion:

If you wish to include communion as part of your worship, find yourself some bread and wine (or juice) and click on this link - (It includes a worship song at 8:10 into the video).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na33U_QaEGQ

Our last hymn is to remind us that Jesus can be our inspiration as well as our help when things are difficult.

Hymn 51. Be Thou my vision

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT_Hjg

We close with an Old Testament blessing.

"The LORD bless you
and keep you;

the LORD make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;

the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace."