

## Bride Valley Telephone Service 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Welcome to our service on this 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

We join together in the *Festal Shout* as we say:

Hallelujah Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed - Hallelujah**

*Collect*

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the hearts of the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord

*Hymn*

He is Lord, He is Lord  
He is risen from the dean and he is Lord.  
Every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess,  
that Jesus Christ is Lord

He is King, he is King  
He is risen from the dean and he is King.  
Every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess,

that Jesus Christ is Lord

He is love; he is love  
He is risen from the dean and he is love.  
Every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess,  
that Jesus Christ is Lord

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*Readings*

### **Acts 3:12-19**

So, when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

### **1 John 3:1-7**

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is

pure. Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

*Reflection by The Reverend Ryder Rogers*

Imagine it. Someone zooms in from space, looks around & asks: 'What's this 'God thing' you earthlings go on about?'

Imagine it: Someone moves into the village, comes to church, and asks: What is Christianity about? What would we say? What is the essence, core, heart of Christianity? Heather and I faced this question in Albania in 1993 50yrs of hard-line communism closed Churches, destroyed Bibles, forbade Christian names, and ALL religion was outlawed. When we arrived, the main airport still had the words of the communist constitution inscribed on its entrance, stating, 'There is no God in Albania' Consequently, people crept up to us and surreptitiously looking around asked: What is this God that is not here? People asked: What is this Christianity that we've been told that we can't practice or talk about? Well - where does one start? Peter says GOD! '*Listen to those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets*', says Acts 3:18, God's Word, the Bible, begins and ends with GOD. This is the FOUNDATION of our Faith - God himself.

In Acts Peter faced a lot of ignorance about God. Not quite so basic as in Albania. The Jews had a belief in God - but it needed to be unpacked.

After healing the man on the Temple steps Peter turned the crowd to God. *God*, he said in v13, '*is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God of our fathers*'.

We can say that there is a God and what he is like for many reasons

**1<sup>st</sup>**: Look up - at Creation. Creation points us to a creating God - *the heavens declare the glory of God*. All that 'is' - is because of God

**2<sup>nd</sup>**: Look inside - at Conscience. How soon a child says: It's not FAIR! . Where does that come from? From God - who is a God of right & wrong, and has *written his law in our hearts* - says Paul! Proverbs says Conscience is *the candle of the Lord*. Peter then pointed to the FOCUS of Christianity ...

**3<sup>rd</sup>**: Look back - to Christ. v13 says: Father God *has glorified* (put the spotlight) *on His Servant, His Rep, his Son, Jesus*. Jesus is God's special One, fulfilling all the *promise foretold by the mouth of all His prophets*.

For example: Christianity is all about JESUS who, as the God/Man (*God with us*) became part of his Creation. That's what we celebrate at Christmas

- Jesus is also '*the Holy One, the Just One*' said Peter. For three years he saw him living the perfect 'moral' life that conscience calls for - He is our example of goodness.

- Jesus' name (Jeshua) means Saviour, Rescuer. At Christ's Cross and Grave Christianity shows God's undeserved love that we call Grace

- Jesus was *denied, rejected, and put to death on the cross*, to become the answer for

our sins. v19 says: it was *'so that your sins may be blotted out, erased, removed'*.  
- Jesus is also called *the Prince of Life, whom Father God raised from the dead*. Peter says we saw an open, an empty grave and a raised Jesus. Christianity is about a crucified risen Christ Jesus Christ, risen to give us life.

Yes, it's about GOD who in Jesus is Lord over sin and death. But there is another side. Christianity is also about ME and my response to Him. When conscience shows us that we are not good enough, we are invited to personally turn to God and trust in Jesus. *Repent therefore and be converted* says v19. When we repent, we receive remission - *sin is forgiven*, it is blotted out, totally removed says v19. When we turn to Christ, we can be transformed into His likeness. *We shall be like him* says John in 1Jn3:2

So, what is Christianity? It's about having a personal relationship with God in Christ Jesus - a relationship of love, trust and transformation. John wrote: *'the world does not know or understand or accept this, that Jesus, appeared to take away our sins!'* But when we turn to him, and trust him, that's when we know who God is and what Christianity is, and can say with John *'O, what love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! and that's what we are!!'*

Song

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,  
For by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.  
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it;  
Sun moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal  
In flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.  
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding  
Yet gave his life a ransom thus setting us free.

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,  
From death he rose, and all his foes shall own his name.

Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit  
To show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

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Confession

Let us confess our sins in the words of David in Ps 51:

I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.  
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.  
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me  
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

*Absolution*

May the Father forgive you by the death of his Son, & strengthen you to live in the power of his Spirit all your days. **Amen**

*Creed*

We declare our faith that covers the past present and future in the words we use at communion:

**Great is the mystery of faith:**

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!**

*Prayers*

With confidence in God's love and power let us **pray**.

Thank you, God: you have revealed yourself in the wonders of your creation, the challenging voice of our consciences, and in the perfect life, words and sacrifice of Jesus, your son our Lord.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We pray for those who do not know you or believe in you yet. Show them the splendour of your glory and the immensity and steadfastness of your love.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Help those who seek to explain your Word and gospel to their families, friends, neighbours and communities.

We pray for all bishops, priests, evangelists, pastoral workers, and all chaplains in hospitals, prisons, and the workplace. Give them fruit for their labours.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We thank you for the Bible, the work and course of the Bible Society that we are following, for the Gideons, and Scripture Union. Guide and inspire us as we read your Word, the Bible.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We pray for all those in positions of authority, in politics, business, education, and health and community. May their words be words of truth and life and their decisions be for the benefit of all.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We pray for the sick in body mind and spirit, the bereaved and the dying, especially the royal family at this time. Show all who walk this road your cross of love and your resurrection power.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

And now, hear our prayer as join together in the **Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, which 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 them that 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**

*Song*

All heaven declares  
The glory of the risen Lord.  
Who can compare  
With the beauty of the Lord?  
For ever he will be  
The Lamb upon the throne.  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship him alone.

I will proclaim  
The glory of the risen Lord,  
Who once was slain  
To reconcile us to God.  
For ever you will be  
The Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship you along.

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*The Blessing*

Now may the God of hope, who raised Christ from the dead, fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and all those you love and pray for, this day and for evermore **Amen.**

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