

**Dorset South & West. Written Service.**  
**Sunday July 27th. Bible Month Week Four.**  
**'The hour' and the resurrection & our drama.**  
**Prepared by Revd Jean Quick.**



**Call to Worship.**

Sing praise to the Lord, all you who belong to Him. Give thanks to His holy name. Psalm 30:4 (New life Version)

**STF 443**

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,  
tender and true;  
out of the heart of the Father above,  
streaming to me and to you:  
wonderful love  
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,  
joyfully came;  
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,  
sharing their sorrow and shame;  
seeking the lost,  
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;  
why do they roam?  
Love only waits to forgive and forget;  
home, weary wanderer, home!  
Wonderful love  
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,  
come and abide,  
lifting my life, till it rises above  
envy and falsehood and pride;  
seeking to be  
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

**Prayers of adoration and confession**

Lord God, this is your day and we shall praise you! This is your day and we shall declare your name!  
This is your day, and we shall worship our risen Saviour and our King! We recall how In the beginning, you  
Lord God created all things, and you saw that they everything was good. At our beginning, you created us  
unique and irreplaceable, we are loved and wanted by you our God, known and treasured by you even before  
you created us. In all our new beginnings, God creates something new. So we will seek you God in the  
freshness of this morning, in the laughter of friends, in the colours of creation, and in this beautiful place  
where we live. Lord God, King of Creation, open our eyes to see your presence, our souls to sense your  
presence, and our hearts to love your presence, ever here in your creation. **Amen.**

Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude, the spiritual blindness that prevents us from appreciating  
the wonder that is this world, the endless cycle of nature, of life and death and rebirth. Forgive us for taking  
without giving, reaping without sowing. Open our eyes to see, our lips to praise and our hands to share. May  
our feet tread lightly on the path we tread and our footsteps be worthy of following, for they lead to you.

**Amen**

**Bible reading: John 21:1-14**

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus.

He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

**Reflection**

I have just finished reading a great novel by a new author. I am so looking forward to the prospect of more books written by the same author, I hope the writer will continue. Today marks the end of our reading of just

one book in the New Testament. John's Gospel. I guess the author already knew that we might want more of his style of writing about Jesus. The last verse of his last chapter says, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." However John writes not to sell books but so that we might come to know the risen Lord Jesus Christ as our saviour. Three thoughts about this books ending inspired by the study guide:

### **The hour**

The first word of our Bible reading raises questions. 'Afterwards'. So what is the story that is to unfold and what does it follow? What is it 'after'? Is it after Jesus has appeared many times to his disciples? In the early morning the risen Jesus appeared to the women at the tomb and to Simon Peter and the other disciple. Who it's believed was the writer of The gospel of John. Later that evening in fear of the Jews the disciples were in a locked room and Jesus appeared to them. He recommissioned them and offered them Peace. Then eight days later he appeared in the locked upper room and especially to address Thomas' doubts. Again he offered them the peace.

The timeline is difficult to determine. However in all three appearances we see that people are fearful, questioning and full of worries about their future. As I am thinking about what the timescale is, or as our study guide suggests, 'The hour.' I am reminded of a playground game that still has me fearful even just thinking about it! "*What's the time Mr Wolf?*" Did you ever play that game? The chosen wolf replies with random hours, nine o'clock, two o'clock until the dreaded reply... "*Dinner time!*" Boy oh! Boy I still remember the screams and nervous laughter as we tried to runaway and not get caught.

'The hour' is mentioned seventeen times in John's Gospel and twenty six times if you count the various forms in which it is mentioned. The first use of the phrase is at the wedding of Cana. In response to His Mother's request that He help the host of the feast whom, she noted, had run out of wine for his guests, Jesus says, "Oh, woman! What have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." (Jn 2:4) One commentator says, "Jesus' hour is the time of his cross and resurrection when he fully reveals the Father's love and accomplishes his saving work." The next three times the phrase is used it's linked with, the hour is coming! I will leave you to look for the other references to 'the hour' and move on to the last few times Jesus used that phrase. John 13:1 'It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.' So through the first half of John's Gospel we are told that the hour is coming and now just a little under two thirds through the gospel, the hour has come! The fear building as Jesus prepares to not runaway but to embrace the hour so that The Father might be glorified. It's interesting to link what happened and is revealed in the gospels with what happened in the Old Testament. Just as John in the prologue linked his opening words with the opening of Genesis, 'in the beginning...'. In John 18:1 We are told Jesus embraces this hour and in the Garden of Gethsemane, the garden of his agony he prays for strength to endure, though sorely tempted to ask to be spared from the suffering. Adam in the book of Genesis, felt no anguish in his garden, because he gave in so quickly, but Jesus knew that to resist this greatest of all temptations, he must suffer. However in John 16:1 Jesus tries to make his disciples understand that even though he faced a terrible 'hour', it would bring something greater and full of hope. "When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world." 'The hour' has to happen. The decisive outcome of this climatic hour is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Afterwards may refer to Jesus coming through 'the hour.'

### **The resurrection**

The Last verse of our Bible reading says, 'This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.' The resurrection has happened but has it been understood and embraced by the disciples? Three times Jesus appeared to them and tried to give them peace of mind and heart. Now it is like they have just returned to their old life. Gone fishing! We see the fishermen are dead on their feet, from fishing all night and they have caught nothing. You could say that they were 'Dead in the water!' Which is a way of saying that their venture was hopeless, they had failed and they were unlikely to succeed in the future. Going backwards hasn't worked. Holding onto their fears and building protection around themselves doesn't seem to have helped. What are they to do, how will they find a way forward?

There's a terrible joke ( *be warned!*) about two fishing friends out on a boat on a lake. One says to the other after a tremendous catch! "Wow let's come again to the same spot tomorrow". The other person replied, "just what I was thinking so I put an X on the side of the boat to mark where we caught so many fish". "You idiot!" the other person said, "we might not get the same boat tomorrow!" I did warn you! It's a silly story but I am sure we can all think of times when we have been foolish and lost our way. Done things that just don't make sense. We might not be able to think clearly and we act irrationally. We have felt 'dead in the water', all hope lost. This seems to be the situation for the disciples and after the resurrection of Jesus.

I wonder if Thomas felt foolish for his proclamation that he would not believe until he had physical proof and what proof he was asking for was fairly grotesque.

When we consider Jesus' instructions to the weary disciples. He said cast your net....where? On the right side of the boat. Are we back to the scenario of my silly joke? One side of the boat had more fish than the other? I find it hard to believe that shoals of fish are so territorial. Do we have something symbolic in John's story and the key is the word 'Right'. Three times the disciples have seen the risen Lord and yet they still fail to recognise him on the shore until they cast their net on the 'right side'. I remember being in a Christian gift shop and a woman trying to buy a cross and chain sort of showed her lack of understanding about what the

cross means, when she proclaimed loudly to the shop assistant and all in the shop. “No! I want one with the little man on it!” Oops, I don’t think I can visualise the crucified Christ as *little*. Sadly too many people look at the wrong side of the cross the other side is the right side, the empty side. Christ has risen and he is among us. The cross is a sign that He is with us. The crucifix expresses the sacrifice that Jesus made for our salvation and it has its place when used to signify our faith. The empty cross represents the resurrection. Christians love crosses, they are a reminder of our faith. For some, crosses are occupied. For others, they are empty. A cross is something we are supposed to take up, to carry and follow Jesus. We love the meanings associated with the cross. Yet one question I’ve been asking myself lately: Am I personally associated with the cross of Jesus and all that it represents? I have seen people’s eyes light up as you ask them about the cross that they are wearing and they tell you that they are Christian’s. However I came across a story of one person putting the same question to a person wearing a really lovely cross and chain. The eyes did light up but the response was very different. The wearer was thrilled because they got a really good deal on the price. It meant nothing more than a valuable item bought at a knock down price. How sad and what a reversal of what the cross and resurrection means. I used to have a problem with highly decorated glitzy cross and chains. However I have made my peace with them. In a way it seems right to make something beautiful that was so vile and yet became the symbol of Christ’s glory. Many people have tried to understand what the number of fish caught meant. I find it is enough to know that it was a great catch that far exceeded any expectations. There’s so much we can speculate about concerning the fish, numbers, Jesus providing food and so on so forth. The great part of this story is the disciples at last realised that this is the risen lord. They finally understood that the resurrection was true. Jesus is alive and what he offered was more than material wealth but the gift of life in all its fullness. They had just caught the greatest catch of their lives. A fortune in the retail world. Yet Simon Peter left the fish and jumped into the water to get to be near Jesus. You can just imagine the other disciples hanging on with all their strength to the great catch, it was too much for them even to haul into the boat. Yet when Jesus asks for a few fish. Where did Peter get his strength from? He jumped back into the boat and dragged not one or two of these very large fish, but the whole net. Peter embracing the risen Christ gives him everything.

### **Our Drama**

When I finish reading a gripping novel I want to read more from the same author. To see if the story can develop and grow. I want to be given more to enjoy. We have come to the end of our Bible Month and journey through John’s Gospel. We started with the prologue. John 21 reads almost as an epilogue but we want a sequel and even a whole series. And if we have really listened and taken in the words of the Gospel story We are the sequel! The study guide gives just three great follow on drama’s:

First our own relationship with Jesus, inviting us deeper into learning, loving and praying.

Then our ongoing relationship with each other as the body of Christ, the Church. Finally our mission in the world. We are sent in love and truth as Jesus was sent, for the sake of abundant life for all, open to where the spirit leads.’

Did you watch the recent series Race across the world? Five teams of two, took on a challenge to race from North Eastern China to the tip of Southern India. By using any means of transportation other than air travel. In the first episode you get to meet the pairs and they are an eclectic mix of friends and relations. In series five you had a teenage couple, a former married couple, two brothers and two sisters and a Mother and son. I love to watch not only the beautiful countries that they travel through, but how each team grows and develops as the race and journey unfolds. Bonds become stronger, confidence grows, old hurts are brought to the surface, there’s new understanding and forgiveness. The teams grow in confidence and understanding of other people whose language they can barely understand and they experience overwhelming acts of human kindness.

We may not be racing across the world or through life but we are in partnership with Christ. How has our journey and relationship been are we still going forward? How do we see ourselves in partnership with Christ? John is reticent to identify himself and uses odd descriptions of himself like the discipline whom Jesus loved. Do we see ourselves like that or maybe as another of John’s descriptions the other disciple? It is only in our abiding with Christ that we are transformed from not only being disciples Jesus loves but to disciples who love Jesus and that love is so evident by how we live and reflect His glory.

### **STF 707**

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:

*O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.

Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy:

*Refrain*

Make me a channel of your peace.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving unto all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

## Prayers of Intercession.

Let us pray for all who have been brought into our attention this past week. For those who we are closest to, our friends and family. We pray for any who need a special blessing. Those who are struggling for whatever reason. Those who we might feel estranged from and yet secretly wonder about them. Those who give us so much of themselves. We thank God for loved ones and trust them into His care.

Let us pray for those who we hardly know and yet we rely so heavily upon them. For those in all kinds of service. From the person who empties our bins to the people who make laws that govern our way of life. We are reliant upon a multitude of people. For some life is easier for others the decisions they have to make can be stressful. For all those who serve us we thank God for them. We pray that we might be more tolerant and thankful for all they do.

Let us pray for those who have so very little. Those who have no hope, who are dispossessed, facing trials we can't begin to imagine. We thank God for the many charities and aid agencies trying to bring relief. We thank God for our provision and we pray that we might find ways to show that we care too.

Hear these our prayers and the prayers that are on our hearts as we say .....**the Lord's Prayer.**

## STF 673

Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free  
and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean,  
and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

## The Blessing

Help me to trust in your guidance and follow your commands, even when they may seem unconventional or difficult. May I be open to receiving your blessings and may they overflow in my life. Thank you for your love and provision.

**Amen.**

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