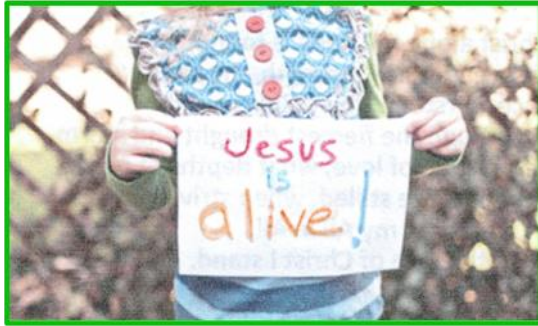


Worship at Home

27th April 2025 - Rachel Mitchell



Call to worship

Today we continue our Easter celebrations, starting with some words from chapter 1 of Revelation:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen.

STF 297: All heaven declares

<https://youtu.be/bLAOYZHuV6U>

**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 alone.**

Noel and Tricia Richards © 1987 Thank you music
Admin by Kingswaysongs

Let us pray:

Living, loving, Lord,

As we come to you today, in this moment, bless us with a real appreciation of your hope-filled, life-giving presence, with us wherever we are. Come fill our hearts with joy so that we will truly rejoice in your resurrection, and know the truth of what it means to be set free by your precious blood, shed because there was no other way to redeem us.

And as we give thanks for all that Jesus has done for us, and as we lift our eyes and our hearts to him in gratitude and wonder, let us also give glory to God our Father, who was, and is, and is to come..... for long before we were born, He saw our need and sent his Son – to enable us to receive His forgiveness and his peace.... and know His love.

Thank you Father, thank you for loving us so much; thank you for sending Jesus to save us; thank you for raising him from the dead, and for the promise we have through him, given to all who believe in him and follow in his footsteps, that we are loved, redeemed and forgiven by You, and will one day be given a place to live in Your eternal kingdom.

Thank you, thank you Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Read: John 20 vs 19-32

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!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

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

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his

hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

STF 303: I know that my redeemer lives

<https://youtu.be/SkLuZxqPPzE>

**I know that my Redeemer lives!
What joy the blest assurance gives! He lives, He lives,
who once was dead; He lives, my everlasting Head!**

**He lives, to bless me with His love;
He lives, to plead for me above; He lives, my hungry
soul to feed; He lives, to help in time of need.**

**He lives, and grants me daily breath;
He lives, and I shall conquer death: He lives, my
mansion to prepare; He lives, to lead me safely there.**

**He lives, all glory to His name;
He lives, my Saviour, still the same; What joy the blest
assurance gives. I know that my redeemer lives!**

Samuel Medley (1738-1799)

Reflection

This is one of my favourite Easter hymns. To be able to say that we know that 'my redeemer lives' is a great privilege and seems to speak of what is in my heart. Yet I wonder what 'knowing' looks like to us today?

For those first disciples locked in an upper room, seeing the risen Christ was completely life changing. The cross must have seemed so final, and yet, here he was, and no locked door could keep him out! Their Jesus, was alive, and there could be no doubt. Now they had seen him, how could they ever have any difficulty in saying, "I know that my redeemer lives."

There was however one disciple missing, Thomas. John tells us of his difficulty. He was the one who had said, just a few days before that he did not know the place where Jesus was going, leading Jesus to say, "I am the way, the truth and the life." For him to know Jesus was alive would take more than just the excited stories of his friends. He needed to see as well.

Much of what we 'know' comes from what we have seen, although we can also accept what has been passed on to us, from others, as truth. To say we 'know' may relate to fact, but not always. It can also be a statement of belief. Where fact stops and the belief starts can be quite fuzzy, especially where the evidence is questioned or not complete. This means one person's truth might be different from their neighbours' truth. What I 'know' might be normal to me, but challenging to you. You may need more evidence to accept (or even reject) my certainty.

Jesus knew Thomas (fact). He saw Thomas' difficulty and honesty. I do think Thomas wanted to believe, which was why, the next time the disciples were together, Thomas was with them. Again, Jesus appeared, and He addressed Thomas directly, saying, "Because you have seen me you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have believed."

These were words for Thomas, yet they are also words for us. Thomas now 'knew' Jesus was alive. He had seen him. The question for us is what does it take for us to also be able to say, from the bottom of our hearts, "I know that my redeemer lives"?

Samuel Medley, the author of 'I Know That My Redeemer Lives', was born in England, just north of London, in 1738. Although raised by a family of faithful Christians, young Medley chose a different path for himself, a path without faith in Jesus.

Medley, joined the British navy. In a fierce battle with a French ship his leg was severely wounded. The

wound worsened and the ship's doctor declared that if there was no improvement by the next day, he would be forced to amputate - to save Medley's life.

Medley spent that night thinking on his family's Christian teachings and praying that his life and leg would be spared. The next morning, the doctor examined the leg and found that it had miraculously improved so much that amputation was unnecessary.

This miraculous healing was the catalyst for Medley's decision to follow Christ. The words in his hymn speak for themselves about what that meant to him. Now he 'knew' that Jesus was not just a character in some ancient stories told by his family but was alive and with him in the here and now.

For Thomas and for Samuel, Jesus saw their searching and gave them what they needed to believe – and I believe he does that for us too, even when we take our unbelief to him (which is an act of belief in itself!)

It may not be instant, and our answers may not come in the way we expect, but throughout history Jesus has enabled very many people to say they know he is alive, even though they have not seen him (this is the work of the Holy Spirit) – and so continuing to show us that he is indeed still living and with us today.

To Ponder: *What do you feel when you sing this hymn which says I KNOW that my Redeemer lives? Are you overcome with wonder or are there doubts? Please take your honest thoughts to God in prayer...*

Prayers for ourselves and others:

Living Lord Jesus, today we thank you that you still reveal yourself to those who choose to follow your way and to trust in you as the truth of all things.

Today we pray for your Church across the world, and your church where we are, asking that we may truly know you and trust you with all our hearts. May we, by doing this, become beacons of your truth, which is 'The Truth', visible to the searching world around us.

We pray too for those we know need our prayers today. The stories in the news, and the people on our prayer lists, those You bring to our minds...

We thank you Lord Jesus, that you came to reveal yourself to us, and to enable us to know what you are

like – to know of your love and the forgiveness and peace you offer. We thank you too for sharing in our lives and for hearing all our prayers. **Amen.**

STF 351: In Christ alone

<https://youtu.be/rn9-UNer6MQ>

**In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song:
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone! who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save:
'till on the cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God
was satisfied, for every sin on him was laid:
Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost
it's grip on me, for I am his and he is mine,
Bought by the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, No fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny. No power of hell,
no scheme of man, can ever pluck me
from his hand; 'till he returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.**

Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
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Blessing

And may the blessing of our living, almighty God,
Protector-parent, amazing Redeemer, and Holy
Confirmer of our faith, rest on us and those we pray
for, this day and always. **Amen.**

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