



Prayers & Readings for this week

- We pray for those struggling with the effects of 'lockdown'.
- We pray for the many who are bereaved (such as Terry S); and frontline nursing staff (such as Michael) who have to cope with stressful situations
- We pray for our Prime Minister, and express our thanks for so many who have fully recovered.
- We remember the family of Councillor Sue Murphy who died this week (a person so instrumental in helping us at Brooklands!)

Monday	Reading Luke 10:1–24 Pray for Annette & Mike Jones & family
Tuesday	Reading Luke 10:25–11:13 Pray for Huw Jones
Wednesday	Reading Luke 11:14–36 Pray for Vivienne Kenyon & Family
Thursday	Reading Luke 11:37–12:7 Pray for Beverley Mitchell & family
Friday	Reading Luke 12:8–34 Pray for Kingdom, Debi, David, Sarah & Faith Matsetlo
Saturday	Reading: Catch up Pray for Dr. Herbert McGonigle & family
Sunday	Reading Luke 12:35–59 Pray for Sigrid Nwator & family

What a day! It's Easter Sunday. We have never had one quite like this before - I expect most of us can say that! I wonder if the swiftness of the spread of COVID-19 around our world this past three months has a parallel in the swift spread of the Good News of Christ in that Middle Eastern community? That's where the likeness stopped of course because this 'virus' has taken so many lives and by contrast Easter Sunday offered an alternative way of life as Jesus exemplified and taught it.

Many people would normally be looking forward to an Easter Bank Holiday weekend! It conjures up a welcome break, hopefully with good weather and, having celebrated the Resurrection, we would undoubtedly be heading out and about. We just never know what a day will bring. This unprecedented global impact has taken us all by surprise and each day we turn on the TV hoping to hear some respite from the dark forecast.

Each Sunday we try to encourage one another with the Good News of the risen Christ. We hope that *this* day especially – on Easter Sunday – we will convey this in word, prayer, action and service to one another.

I find the Lord at work in many unexpected ways. God Almighty is not limited to working only through churches and Christian fellowships. He is a Sovereign God, working his 'grace' in the lives of people long before they are even aware of God's Spirit stirring in their lives. This weekend many people will make the connection, the light will be turned on and 'Faith, mighty faith', will kick into operation – a kind of faith they did not know was possible. With our God, there are so many breathtaking 'possibilities' before us!

Each week now I try to thank the many people who 'pulling together' make our weekly digital service happen on time, and 'on the button' - showing that things 'working together' achieve what, on our own, would be impossible.

Please keep your messages, prayer requests and encouragements coming! Please text [07515104216] or email us directly at info@brooklandschurch.uk.

Our Good Friday service was a joint District one with many others. Today, Easter Sunday, we declare that old yet meaningful shout of faith – "He is Risen!" Amen.

**Lord Jesus, we celebrate the empty tomb with hearts full of faith and joy.
Amen!**



Message: *'The Two Declarations'*

Readings: Matthew: 3: 13-17: Acts 10:34-43

My point of focus this Easter Sunday 2020, comes from the beginning of Christ's ministry... **'And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him, I am well pleased."'** (Matthew 3:17)

I wanted to tell you this morning that 'God Loves us - All the Time!' I know it's Easter Sunday. And I know that today we celebrate the illuminating fact that Jesus was raised from the dead! On this Lord's Day, countless preachers will be reading resurrection passages from Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, or John 20.

Our Resurrection passage tells the story from Peter's perspective in Acts 10. We started reading from verse 34 where it says, 'Then Peter began to speak...' If you know anything about Peter, and I am sure you do, then you will know that he was quick to speak... and when he opened his mouth he usually stuck his foot in it... **But not this time!**

When Peter first followed Jesus, he wasn't renowned for keeping his personal opinions to himself. On one occasion he said to Jesus, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!' This was a special God-moment for him, and Jesus said as much. Sadly a few minutes later he added his personal opinion that it wasn't a good idea for Jesus to go to the cross.

I love Peter's next words in verse 34, 'Then Peter began to speak: "I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism...."'

There have been many followers of Jesus who have had in mind 'the things of men' rather than 'the things of God'... just like Peter did.

It was immediately following this Revelation & Rebuke that Jesus took the 'inner circle' of Peter, James and John, onto the Mount of Transfiguration. They must have thought they were more special than anyone else!!

Why - it was... these three plus Jesus, Elijah & Moses! They could be excused for thinking that they were Jesus' favourites! Later, of course, after the Death & Resurrection of Jesus, after a lot of water had run under the bridge, Peter was able to say, 'I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism'!

It was between these two experiences that Peter had come to realise the great love of God in Jesus Christ for *all*! This love was first revealed in the incontrovertible fact that...

1. God loved Jesus

At the very beginning of Jesus' ministry, before Jesus had taught anything of note, before any miracle was performed, and before the crowds gathered around him, God the Father was first to speak... This is what we read:

'And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."' (Matthew 3:17)

I don't think we will truly understand 'love' properly until we 'realise' **how much The Father loved the Son!** 'This is My Son Whom I Love'. Most of you will know which verse is referred to in the phrase, 'The Gospel in a nutshell'.

Why it's John 3: 16. **'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son... that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life!'**

This verse looms large for us when we come to Easter week; but who did God the Father love more, His only Son or us, his creation?

2. God loves me!

It's what the Gospel declares unashamedly! If God loves His one and only Son – who died for us – then he loves us infinitely, unfathomably and incredibly!

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)

It dawned on me that Jesus took the Father's declared love for Him at his Baptism and delivered it to ALL mankind on the Cross! It is important to see this because the story of Easter week is the pinnacle of God's gracious plan.

We find this love of God shown in Jesus' treatment of Peter. Jesus comes to Peter and asks him, 'Peter, do you love me more than these?' In fact, three times he asks him.

Peter, the 'loud-mouth' (hope it's okay to be that blunt!); the one who denied knowing Jesus, the one who ran away, the one who failed so many times; the list goes on... No! We find that **Jesus comes after Peter again and again and... again.**

We are under His Intensive Care! *He* is our ventilator; *He* is our oxygen, and the air that we breathe. He is our Great Physician and the cost was never a consideration. Never!

So on this glorious Easter Sunday we have the simple, yet profound, ABC of the Gospel. **Almighty** God declared His love for His Son at his **Baptism** – and Jesus took this same love and declared it to us from the **Cross!**

From this Baptism to the Cross, God Almighty, Father, Son & Holy Spirit has declared His love for you and me – it is **signed, sealed and settled!** Amen.

Web: www.BrooklandsChurch.uk Email: info@BrooklandsChurch.uk