

Sunday 12th May 2024

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God is love, let us adore God by sharing God's love.

God is ever present, around us and within us, we worship together in God.

Reading Luke 24:44 - 53

Story – Keeping in touch

The bear family lived happily together, Mrs Bear, Mr Bear, Tom and Tabitha. Tom went to school but Tabitha was too young for school. Mr Bear went to work during the week and at weekends he played with Tom and Tabitha and did the garden.

One day Mrs Bear had a phone call, her best friend had to go into hospital for a few days and asked Mrs Bear if she could stay to look after her two children. Of course, Mrs Bear said yes and arranged with Mr Bear that she would take Tabitha with her but as Tom should not miss school he would stay behind and Mr Bear would see him to school, a neighbour would look after him after school until Mr Bear came home, and she would leave meals in the fridge for their tea. Tom was not happy that he was being left behind, and that his mummy would not be there to tuck him in bed but Mr Bear promised to read him stories and Mrs Bear said she would be back in a couple of days.

Mrs Bear and Tabitha left late in the afternoon, and Mr Bear watched television with Tom, gave him milk and a biscuit and read a story before tucking him into bed. As Tom turned over he felt something crinkle under his pillow and reaching underneath found one of his favourite football cards with a sticky label that read 'love, Mum'. He smiles and went to sleep.

The next morning Mr Bear took Tom's lunch box from the fridge where Mrs Bear had left it, then bundled him into the car and took him to school. Tom was a bit sad at not having seen his Mum but when he opened his lunchbox at lunch time he found an extra biscuit with another note saying, 'love mum', and he smiled again. After school he went home with his friend and her mum and played until Mr Bear came home from work. Mr Bear made pizza for tea and afterwards his mobile phone rang. He answered it and then shouted for Tom, his mum was on facetime to say good night and that she would be home in time to meet him from school the next day.

Mr Bear tucked Tom into bed and as he went to sleep he smiled as getting a phone call from his mum. The next day his mum was there to meet him and she gave him a big hug and another football card for being a good boy.

Keeping in touch makes a difference, it is a reminder that we are connected and that we need each other.

Reading Acts 1:1-11 ([NRSV](#))

Reflection

Think about everything that has happened to the disciples since Good Friday.

What difference has it made having the resurrection appearances?

Resurrection was about sealing in confidence and knowledge in readiness for action.

We read the stories of Jesus giving power, through the Spirit to the disciples but do we make the connection between that and ourselves? Do we understand that part of our response to God is accepting the power that goes with the presence of God in our lives. We read of the miracles that Jesus, and later the disciples, performed but do we understand our power to action miracles?

The power of God exists in creation, it is the energy that connects everything but it is also more. It is a thread of knowledge that is within the essence of creation and therefore within us. Knowledge is important but we also need wisdom. Knowledge tells us that a tomato is a fruit but wisdom is not putting it in your fruit salad!

We have access to all the knowledge in the universe when we find the key to the cupboard and Jesus told us the key, it is believing in the oneness of God, it is understanding ourselves as connected, part of creation, it is listening/sensing and finding that within us which is God and then trusting it.

We are not very good at that even after 2000 years, maybe because for many of them we were told we were separate from God, and God was to be feared. The church hid the facts in creeds and doctrines that obscured and confused the pure message of Jesus.

In our reading from Acts we have the disciples looking at the space where Jesus had been, looking up towards where he seemed to go and the angels asking why they are looking to heaven. Trevor Dennis, in the Book of Books, phrases it this way, 'As he was speaking, a dense mist enveloped him. It was the same as that strange mist which once had hidden the summit of Mount Sinai when God met Moses and gave him the Ten Words. Much more recently it had fallen on another mountain when Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John, and they had seen him as he really was. It had shone then with the light of the presence of God, for it was God's covering, God's cloak, God's very mystery. Now it shone even more brightly. It shone with the brightness of heaven and sparkled with the love of God. It surrounded Jesus, and he disappeared from their sight, as if he had become part of the brightness and mystery of God. At last the friends knew the full truth about Jesus.'

Jesus is gone and now the task of discipleship begins, they are to go and be Jesus in the world, using the power of God to make a difference in people's lives. Ascension is an annual reminder that we have a task to do, we have a call to follow and it will not be fulfilled sitting in church buildings but rather in our everyday lives.

What if Jesus had not ascended? Would the disciples have ever found the courage to move out and be? We celebrate Pentecost as the birth of the church but perhaps it would never have happened without the ascension and yet we often forget to mark this date.

After his death Obi Wan Kenobi continues to guide Luke in ways he could not have done in life. After his death on the cross the resurrected Jesus prepared the disciples for a time when he would not be there in person and yet Jesus still guides our lives through his teachings and message. We have to move on like the early disciples and begin to trust ourselves. There are other familiar stories where a character is present until they are no longer needed – Mary Poppins, nanny Mc Phee to name two. Here we have the point at which the disciples were ready to move into the next stage and isn't that something to celebrate?

The disciples had a choice and scripture tells us how they made and used their choice. We have a choice and history will tell how we have made and used our choice. History in the stories if lives changed because of our actions, stories of how we made a difference by working together in the oneness of God and trusting in our connection through the Spirit. We are one with God, we have the power of the Spirit in and upon us and if we search inside we will find the person we are meant to be and in accepting that we will change the world.

Music [Search for the Hero inside yourself](#) (M people)

Prayers

Loving God you have given us free will. In all things there is choice; to be one with creation or apart from creation; to be one with all people or apart from all people; to belong or not belong.

When we choose to be one, we are bound in love,
for our world, for each other, for you, the source of all being.
In giving we receive, and our lives are fulfilled.

When we choose to be apart we become bound by fear, seeing others against us, learning to defend our ground, hoarding what we perceive to be ours. We do not know which way to turn.

Loving God, where there is choice may we seek our highest choice, choosing love as our path.

We pray together for our world knowing that you are a part of all that is and seeking your guidance as we build a place of hope and peace for all. You have called us through Jesus, and we follow the way, recognising the importance of love and acceptance in building your Kingdom. Where people are burdened by injustice and inequality may our choices lessen the burden and our life together challenge the choices which feed injustice and inequality.

Loving God, where there is choice may we seek our highest choice, choosing love as our path.

As we worship together, we lift to you our life as church and pray for wisdom and courage as we make decisions for the future. Recognising the treasures of the past may we be bold in creating a church for today. Recognising the many ways in which we have experienced your presence may we be creative in offering experiences to others who are searching for more in their life. Recognising our own sense of belonging may we be open and welcoming to others and reach out to them where they are in love.

Loving God, where there is choice may we seek our highest choice, choosing love as our path.

As we journey together we offer you our stories, our hopes and our dreams, but also our fears. The times when we are overwhelmed, when we lack confidence and when we know we have not chosen the highest option. Your love is full of grace, you invite us to journey and you forgive us and invite us to forgive each other. Within the community of church may we model your gracious love and encourage one another through our sharing and our learning together, putting aside our perceived failures and through our mistakes growing in wisdom.

Loving God, where there is choice may we seek our highest choice, choosing love as our path.

In our living may our choices show our faith. May our decisions bring balance to creation and maintain the life you have created, a life of generosity and wonder, a life of opportunity and the encouragement to explore possibilities, a life of love. Giving thanks for all we have received may we be gifting people, sharing what we have with those who have need and seeing and sensing new opportunities to create oneness and harmony through our sharing.

We pause to reflect on the stories that we have heard this week and to listen for your Spirit guiding our decisions and actions.

Loving God, where there is choice may we seek our highest choice, choosing love as our path.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen