

Worship at Home – 27th April 2025 (2nd Sunday of Easter)

A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Erica Gassor.

Call to worship

Come and find God,
the one who breaks down doors,
who looks for us wherever we are,
who loves us whatever we do.
Come and join the God of surprises,
who unlocks doors in our lives
and opens our hearts to love.

Hymn – STF N/K – It is a thing most wonderful William Walsham How (1823-1897)

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| 1 | It is a thing most wonderful,
almost too wonderful to be,
that God's own Son should come from
heaven,
and die to save a child like me. | 2 | And yet I know that it is true;
he came to this poor world below,
and wept and toiled and mourned and
died,
only because he loved us so. |
| 3 | I cannot tell how he could love
a child so weak and full of sin;
his love must be most wonderful,
if he could die my love to win. | 4 | I sometimes think about his cross,
and shut my eyes, and try to see
the cruel nails, and crown of thorns,
and Jesus crucified for me. |
| 5 | But even could I see him die,
I could but see a little part
of that great love, which, like a fire,
is always burning in his heart. | 6 | It is most wonderful to know
his love for me so free and sure;
but 'tis more wonderful to see
my love for him so faint and poor. |
| 7 And yet I want to love thee, Lord;
Oh, light the flame within my heart,
and I will love thee more and more
until I see thee as thou art! | | | |

Bible reading – Psalm 150

- ¹ Praise God in his holy temple.
Praise him in his mighty heavens.
- ² Praise him for his powerful acts.
Praise him because he is greater than anything else.
- ³ Praise him by blowing trumpets.
Praise him with harps and lyres.
- ⁴ Praise him with tambourines and dancing.
Praise him with stringed instruments and flutes.
- ⁵ Praise him with clashing cymbals.
Praise him with clanging cymbals.
- ⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord.

A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness

Father God, creator of all things, you existed before the world began.
You are with us today. You are the future.
Jesus, all powerful king, you won the battle of the cross
and swapped your crown of thorns for heaven's throne.
Now you are exalted and reign in victory.
All glory and power are yours.

Holy Spirit, breath of God, you are with us,
stirring hearts and opening truth.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you unlocked our hearts to receive you.
Through you we have life with a capital "L"
Lord God, you call us to be witnesses for you
but very often fear holds us back –
fear of speaking out and being made to look a fool, or,
even worse, imprisoned, as many are in other countries.
Lord God, we're sorry when we allow our fears to dominate.
Sometimes, like Thomas,
we need to see evidence of your promises before our fears subside.

Lord God, locked doors mean nothing to you but we often hang on to the key,
not wanting to face what lurks on the other side of the door;
sometimes unable to forgive ourselves for past actions.
Lord God, unlock any areas of our lives that we may not have dealt with.
We're sorry, Lord. Fling wide the doors.
Breathe on us afresh with your peace, we pray.
Risen Lord, we give thanks and praise for our many blessings.
You know our point of need and you meet it.
Because of you we have reason to rejoice.
You opened our hearts and blessed us with your peace.
Thank you, risen Lord. Because of you we live and grow
in witness to your love.
We praise your Holy Name. **Amen**

Hymn – STF 20 – Be still for the presence of the Lord David J Evans (born 1957)

- 1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;
 Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear.
 In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground;
 Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.
- 2 Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
 He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned.
 How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!
 Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.
- 3 Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
 He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace.
 No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him;
 Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

Bible reading – John 20:19-29

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together. They had locked the doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, “May peace be with you!” ²⁰ Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were very happy when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “May peace be with you! The Father has sent me. So now I am sending you.” ²² He then breathed on them. He said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Thomas was one of the 12 disciples. He was also called Didymus. He was not with the other disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So they told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “First I must see the nail marks in his hands. I must put my finger where the nails were. I must put my hand into his side. Only then will I believe.”

²⁶ A week later, Jesus’ disciples were in the house again. Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, “May peace be with you!” ²⁷ 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.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen me but still have believed.”

Reflection on the reading

In our first reading today, Psalm 150, we read about praising God in different ways and ended by stating ‘Let everything that has breath praise the Lord’. Indeed, we should!

Particularly at this time of year when we think of how Jesus came to earth and died on a cross for our salvation. It must have been such an overwhelming sequence of events, and it is quite easy to understand why the disciples hid behind closed doors and felt scared after Jesus was crucified. They had not really understood all that Jesus had been teaching them and thought he would be the great leader of the new church and not be crucified like a thief.

They were scared of retribution if people realised that they were His followers. They were scared, uncertain and at a loss to know what they should do and here were the women saying that Jesus had gone from the tomb and Mary even said she had spoken with him – there must have been much bewilderment!

It is easy with hindsight to think we would have realised and been brave. But how often do we hide behind doors, not necessarily physical doors, but we put up a shield to ignore what we don’t want to see or hear? We pretend things aren’t there and walk past, preferring to go on with our lives as they are – avoiding conflict and making ourselves unpopular. It is very easy to hide behind closed doors of one sort or another, but Jesus breaks down those doors, asking what are we hiding from. If we follow him, he will lead us and guide us through the difficulties and point us in the right way so that we can become true followers of him. Take time to reflect on what doors you have put up to avoid a situation or to hide behind because you are scared and remember that Jesus is there for you, to turn to and pray and tear down the doors and walk with you through the situation or strengthen you when afraid. **Amen**

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are alive! We praise you for the glory of your resurrection which means that we will never be separated from you. We pause for a moment to remember times when we have known your presence in our lives this week...

Help us to look for signs of you in everything we do, wherever we go and whoever we meet this week. Keep us focussed on you, our risen triumphant Lord. Help us to kneel with Thomas and say, 'My Lord and my God'.

Lord Jesus, even when we don't have your physical presence with us:
help us to know what's real.

Lord Jesus, Thomas needed to see the wounds in your hands and side to know that you really had risen. We thank you that those scars demonstrate to us that you are a wounded God who therefore understands all our sorrows and suffering. We know that you have gone before us into the darkest places. We lift to you now all the places in our world that are suffering. We pray for Ukraine, still in the grip of war; we pray for Afghanistan and Yemen whose conflict and pain has gone from our news screens; we remember those suffering from natural disasters. In the silence we bring to you any other places of pain in our world...

Lord Jesus, your wounds remind us that you are there and that you care:
help us to care for them too.

Lord, we know that when you stretched your arms out on the cross it was to show love for the whole world. Everyone matters to you. Everyone is within the realm of your love. Everyone is loved equally by you. We particularly pray for refugees and all those fleeing persecution. We ask that our government will show compassion to all those who are seeking safety and stability in our country. We pray for people that the world seems to have forgotten: the lost and alone; the housebound; those in hospital for many weeks. We pray for those living on the streets; children in the care system; those who feel unloved.

Lord Jesus, your outstretched arms tell us that you love the whole world:
help us to love everyone too.

Lord, you came into that upper room, into a place full of fearful people and brought the beauty of your peace. We pray for all those we know who need your peace at the moment: those who are sick; those who are anxious and troubled; those who are sad or grieving; those who are dying; those who are facing exams soon; those who are anxious and perplexed, those who are afraid.

Lord Jesus, breathe your peace deep into their hearts:
and fill them with the knowledge of your presence.

Lord, you didn't want your disciples to keep the good news of your rising to themselves. You said to them: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." Help us not to be afraid to tell our family and friends about you. Show us who to talk to and how to show your love to those around us: in our streets and in our homes. We pray for all those we know who are struggling to believe that you are real and that you really rose again from the dead. Help us to share with them what we know about you and help us to show them your reality by living and loving like you did.

Lord Jesus, you give us your peace and love:
send us out to take your love and peace to others around us.

Lord Jesus, as we start a new week, take us out of our upper rooms and into the world to live and breathe your presence. Go before us into every situation we face and help us to know that you are really there.

Thank you, Lord, for rising again for us:
and filling our hearts with joy. **Amen**

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Hymn – STF 272 – From heaven you came Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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| 1 From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served but to serve,
and give Your life that we might live.
<i>This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow Him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.</i> | 2 There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said.
<i>Refrain</i> |
| 3 Come see His hands and His feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice;
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.
<i>Refrain</i> | 4 So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone Him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.
<i>Refrain</i> |

Blessing

And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all,
this day and ever more. **Amen**

Bible readings from [New International Reader's Version \(NIRV\)](#)

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