

**Worship for fifth Sunday after Easter - 9th May
2021**

from Brian & Clare Kennard

Call to worship: "O worship the Lord with me,
and let us exalt His name together" (Psalm 34:3)

Suggested Hymn: Thine be the glory!

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness, hymns of triumph
sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy
deathless love:

bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

Refrain:

*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

Opening Prayers

In the beginning, God made everything and saw that
it was good.

God of all, we come before you today just as we are,
We lift to you the joy of being alive,
We praise you that we are part of your amazing
Creation.

Plant in us an ever-growing love for you,
Let worship and praise burst from our hearts,
Let the fruitfulness of our lives bring glory to you.

Amen.

The Bible says, "If we say we have no sin, we
deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we
confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us
our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"
(1 John 4: 8-9)

*Let God speak to you about the attitudes and actions
that need changing in your life. Confess to Him your*

*weaknesses and failures, and receive His cleansing
and forgiveness as He has promised.*

Prayer for today ("Collect"):

O God, you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour
into our hearts such love towards you, that we,
loving you in all things and above all things, may
obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can
desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for
ever and ever. **Amen.**

If you have a Bible of your own, please read **Psalm
98.**

Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:12-28

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised
from the dead, how can some of you say that there
is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no
resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has
been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our
preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More
than that, we are then found to be false witnesses
about God, for we have testified about God that he
raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him
if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead
are not raised, then Christ has not been raised
either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith
is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also
who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only
for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all
people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead,
the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For
since death came through a man, the resurrection of
the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in
Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made
alive. ²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then,
when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then
the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom
to God the Father after he has destroyed all
dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign
until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The
last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he 'has
put everything under his feet'. Now when it says that
'everything' has been put under him, it is clear that
this does not include God himself, who put
everything under Christ. ²⁸ When he has done this,
then the Son himself will be made subject to him
who put everything under him, so that God may be
all in all.

Reflection:“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor. 15:20)

The story of Cecil and Cedric Seed

(Through the wonders of modern technology, we have been able to eavesdrop upon this conversation which takes place under ground)

CEDRIC Morning!

CECIL Uh! What? Where am I? Who are you?

CEDRIC Hello, I'm Cedric Seed and pleased to make your acquaintance, I'm sure. As to where we are, we're where seeds are supposed to be, down below.

CECIL Oh, I suppose that's it then. I'm Cecil. Been wet lately, hasn't it?

CEDRIC Yes, well that's the Gardener you see. He makes sure we get wet a lot, so that one day we'll be able to grow up above.

CECIL Oh, come off it, you don't believe all that 'better life up above' stuff do you? Nobody's ever been back to prove it, have they?

CEDRIC When I was in my packet, I was fortunate to have a wise teacher who could read what it said on the outside of the packet. There was a lovely picture of what you and I are going to be like - strong, beautiful and a delight to the gardener. All we have to do is absorb the good water the gardener gives us.

CECIL If you believe everything you're told you must be daft. Anyway, I've heard that up above there are lots of dangers and the Sun is so hot that it burns your leaves off. As for the gardener, how do you know he's so good. No, I'm staying here in the safety of the soil thank you very much.

CEDRIC Cecil, you **must** believe in the goodness of the gardener *(at this point the Gardener is again watering the ground)*

CECIL Urrgh! Goodness, indeed! Good night to you!

(they doze off, but we pick up the conversation again next day)

CEDRIC Good morning, Cecil!

CECIL Is it?

CEDRIC Oooh, I do feel funny.

CECIL Told you so. Too wet. Some "good gardener"!

CEDRIC I'm ... oooh... .I'm growing!!! *(Cedric shoots his way up to the world above the soil)*

CECIL Poor fool, that's the end of him. Still, I shall be lonely without him. I wonder what it's really like up above No, it's not worth thinking

about -we can never know. I'll just keep a low profile down here and make the best of it.

CEDRIC Wow! This is fantastic! Amazing! So much better than my teacher said! Hey, thanks gardener! Must tell Cecil! *(Shouts)* Oi, Cecil, come on up. It's great up above! *(Thinking aloud)* Can he hear me down there?

CECIL 'Up above'! What a load of old manure! Nobody knows, do they. Do they???

No sermon as such today - I just ask you to meditate on the meaning of the sketch you've just read, and to let God renew His hope in your heart. Pray too for those around you or family members back home who are sceptical about the Gospel of Christ. Which leads to...

Prayers of intercession

In your own words, remember before God...those in authority in this country and around the world grappling with the present crisis, especially just now in India,all those “on the front line” whether NHS staff, transport workers, shop workers, the emergency services...those most personally affected by the Covid-19 outbreak: the bearded, those seriously ill, those who have already lost their jobs.. the Church of Jesus Christ as together we seek to witness to the love and care of God in word and action....and the many other difficult problems humanity faces...and for yourself and your family. Remember, too, thankfulness!

The Lord's Prayer (traditional version):

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; .
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May each tree we see this week be a reminder of the connection we have with the Creator of that tree. May each piece of fruit we eat can be a reminder of the goodness of the Spirit of God nurturing us. Go in peace to bear fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. **Amen.**