

12th April, 202



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

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.

Thine be the glory, risen,
conquering Son;
endless is the victory Thou o'er
death hast won.

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the
tomb.

Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear
and gloom;
let His church with gladness hymns
of triumph sing,

for the Lord now liveth; death hath
lost its sting.

Thine be the glory, risen,
conquering Son;
endless is the victory Thou o'er
death hast won.

No more we doubt Thee, glorious
Prince of life!!
Life is nought 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.

Thine be the glory, risen,
conquering Son;
endless is the victory Thou o'er
death hast won.

The Sermon by Timothy James

Read Acts 2:14a,22-32 and John 20:19-31 – The King's Kingdom is:

In his address on the day of Pentecost, Peter was careful to make it clear that the death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Spirit fulfil the prophecies of Joel 2:28-32 and Psalm 16:8-11. He is saying these events were **always the plan** of God (though we could not understand it): in v.23 he spells out that Jesus was handed over “by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge.” What was the plan?

1. Why did Jesus die?

This is expressed many ways in both Testaments. Most fundamentally, the sacrificial system of Israel was based on the idea that “the life of the flesh is in the blood,” (Leviticus 17:11) and the writer to the Hebrews makes it clear (9:22) that “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” and says of Jesus that (26–28) “He has appeared once for all... to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

When Isaiah was looking forward to the coming Servant of God, he said (53:4–6, 10–12) that he “was pierced for our transgressions... and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”.

The answer, then, is that he died **to deal with sin – our sin**. And this was always the plan: as Isaiah says (53:10) “It was the Lord’s will to crush him.” This is why in Revelation 13:8 Jesus is described as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

2. Why was Jesus raised?

Paul writes (1 Corinthians 15:20–26, 54–57) that “The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” Resurrection is explicitly anti-death, and so (Romans 6:8–10) “Death no longer has dominion over him.” Our union with Christ extends this liberation to us believers, so through death he destroys “the one who has the power of death... and frees those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death” (Hebrews 2:14–15).

So the answer is: he was raised **to deal with death – our death**. And this was always the plan: Jesus declared in John 11:25–26 “I am the resurrection and the life... whoever believes in me will live, even though they die”.

3. Why did the Spirit come?

Our understanding of this must begin with the Old Testament prophecy (Ezekiel 36:26–27) promising us a new heart and a Spirit enabling us to obey, which we cannot do in our own power. This is why Jesus promised his followers after his resurrection that “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

Similarly, Paul says that “The Spirit helps us in our weakness” (Romans 8:26–27) and prays that we will be “strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16)

The answer must be: **to deal with weakness – our weakness**. And that was always the plan: look at **John 14:16–17, 26; 16:7–15**, where Jesus says he has to go away because this is *necessary* for the coming of the Spirit he promised as (“unless I go away...”).

So the cross not Plan B for human sin, but the means by which sin is judged and removed; the resurrection was not a fortunate reversal, but the necessary vindication and victory of Jesus; and the gift of the Spirit is not a postscript to Easter, but the intended means by which the benefits of Christ’s work are made effective in human lives.

The weakness of the disciples before the day of Pentecost is striking. Without the Spirit, the disciples remain the same people who fled and denied Jesus just three days previously. They are locked in, by fear and by unbelief (Thomas). Jesus had risen and appeared to them, but they were not transformed.

So are we like them: sins forgiven, death defeated, still hiding away? We are called and enabled to live in the power of his resurrection – as Paul says “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection ... so that somehow I may attain the resurrection of the dead”. (Phil.3:10).

2nd Sunday of Easter: *Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen*

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: April 15th and May 20th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: April 22nd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>