

St John's Lindow

IN TOUCH

Easter 2020

The Risen Jesus

*They killed him...but God raised Jesus
from the dead and caused him to be seen*

Acts 10:39 - 40

SIMON'S SCRAWL

by Simon Gales

As I write the pandemic is exploding. Schools are shutting. Many businesses are at risk. Things we took for granted are gone. Shelves in the shops are empty and we're counting the number of loo rolls. Our health is under threat and for many the future is very uncertain and bleak. I don't even know whether this magazine will be printed!

To be without hope threatens the meaning of our existence; to live without hope is too painful but Coronavirus has shattered blind optimism and short-sighted escapism. In the face of such a threat we need a better hope, a hope that will not be snatched away by death!

It is at this point that the Christian message is such good news. The Bible looks forward to the hope of eternity with Christ. There is no degree of risk or disappointment. It cannot be frustrated. Unlike all our other hopes it won't disappoint. It is guaranteed by God himself and bears his signature: the resurrection of Jesus. The apostle Peter writes: *'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ'*. This hope is so different! It is not based on my circumstances. It comes through Jesus' resurrection, and is therefore independent of the news headlines. It is grounded in what God has done in raising Jesus. And because that event has happened, it is secure. Not wishful thinking, but guaranteed hope.

The apostle Paul declares: *'Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep'*.

The resurrection of Jesus was not just a one-off event. It was the *firstfruits*, the initial part of the harvest that indicates more is to come. All who are in Christ will be made alive; his resurrection is the guarantee and demonstration of what is to come for those who trust in him.

Someone once said it's like watching slow-motion footage of a dam bursting. At first there is a slight bulge. Then a crack appears, followed by a spurt of water. The spurt becomes a jet and before long the entire section of dam gives way and the whole lake empties. It started with just one small spurt. But that small spurt 'guaranteed' that the rest was to come. The same is true of Christ and those united to him: where he goes they will follow. In his resurrection he is the first of many. There is a hope that shines through the worst of times!

Yours,
Simon



SKETCHY THEOLOGY

BY BEN HOLLINSHEAD

"SECOND-HAND TOMB AVAILABLE TO LET"



Marc: So how did you both come to meet?

Hazel: I originally come from a village east of Edinburgh and worked at Cambridge university. It was when we both worked for AstraZeneca that we eventually met.

Nigel: We went to a conference in Berkley, California back in 1997 and things went from there really!

Marc: And how did you both find the job at AstraZeneca?

Hazel: We were there for over twenty years and it was brilliant. However, when the company moved to Cambridge, we took voluntary redundancy.

Nigel: It was the best option for us and we both got new jobs very quickly. I ended up moving to the Christie hospital and Hazel took on some church and charity work.

Hazel: Yeah, I started to help Gareth with a charity he set up, linked with the Out of the Question animation he helped to create. I also spoke to an old colleague and found myself working for three days a week.

Marc: That sounds interesting! What actually brought you both into church life?

Hazel: While I was part of a church in my village, it wasn't until I heard a very charismatic speaker in Edinburgh that I decided I needed to make a decision about Jesus.

Nigel: I had a bit of a different journey. I wasn't part of a church growing up, but I got confirmed as a teenager even though it didn't mean anything. As a scientist I thought it was tough to understand but when I met Hazel I wanted to learn more.

Marc: So how do you both find St Johns?

Hazel: It's a family. I had a health scare a few years ago and actually turned to Gareth and Sarah before anyone else and they really helped me. We all stick together. The teaching is also excellent.

Nigel: It's definitely the teaching for me. I've always



felt welcome in the men's group and I enjoy the music group too. Even if it can be a bit stressful!

Marc: It's always good for us all to get stuck in! How do your daughters, Hannah and Sarah find St Johns?

Hazel: Hannah definitely values a lot of what Christianity is about and she's made a good friend through a Christian camp. Sarah does a lot of vocational dancing so can be busy but they're both very mature about it.

Nigel: It's just great that it's a church that takes youth and children seriously. It's important to invest in the children's stuff!

Hazel: I got to a point as a teen where I said I didn't want to go anymore, but I think we all mature as we get older.

Marc: I definitely agree with you there! On that note, we're thinking of the resurrection with Easter coming up, so what would you say that means to you both as Christians?

Hazel: It means hope of the life to come! It puts everything into perspective as it's a miraculous thing God did. It's that confirmation of how awesome he is.

Nigel: I basically just mirror Hazel's words. I used to believe in fate but this is the one sure hope we have.

Marc: That's a great point to end on. Thank you both for taking some time to share your stories with us.

MISSION UPDATE

Grace & Paul Robinson

What a difference the risen Jesus makes!

Picture the scene described in Revelation 7 of the great multitude of people that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb." Contrast it with the scene in John 12 of Jesus travelling towards Jerusalem and his death: he is greeted by crowds waving palm branches but this is nothing compared to the great multitude we see in Revelation. In John, we see that the crowd do not really know who Jesus is. They worship him as a man who comes 'in the name of the Lord'. Their vision is so small – they are excited that Jesus might be the 'King of Israel' – a King just for them. Little did they realise that they were worshipping the King of all nations, tribes, peoples & languages.



For the last 6 months, I (Grace) have been seconded from OMF to work at Holy Trinity Platt as their Volunteer Intercultural worker. The vision statement for the work is: By God's grace, we see Holy Trinity Platt grow as a Jesus-focused intercultural community of believers reaching out in mission to the city of Manchester and beyond. An intercultural



church is a church in which every member can 'give' of their time and gifts - and have their giving received! A motivating verse is Acts 20:35, "It's more blessed to give than receive." If as a church, we do not create opportunities for people to give then we are withholding blessing. Part of my role is considering ways in which the church may unintentionally be preventing people from giving – this might be because we tend to gravitate towards people who are like us! They become our 'go to' to help in church services, go on rotas or start new initiatives – but what about those we don't know so well? The positive experiences I had in Cambodia of being led and taught by Christians from the Majority World are a big influence. I experienced great teaching from Malaysian & Japanese co-workers; I learned much from watching an intrepid and passionate Thai missionary; and I was led in stimulating Bible study by my Cambodian house-help.

Isn't the picture in Revelation 7 exciting? A vibrant community made up of all sorts of people from all sorts of places, united in their worship of Jesus - only possible because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Thank you so much for your continued support for our family & OMF.

We hope you have a special Easter.

HOPE *central*

Many of you will recall Robert Larkman, the director and founder of Hope Central who visited us in February where he spoke of the important work that Hope Central provides locally. Several people from our Church Family expressed an interest in volunteering to support this essential work, so a few of us popped along to the Hope Centre at Colshaw to see for ourselves what they are doing and to find out how we might help.

Hope Central was set up because of a real Christian heart for serving the local community. We often forget that on our doorstep, there are many individuals and families who face real difficulties with day to day life and the four Hope Centres offer a lifeline to them.

A typical day at a Hope Centre includes a time of welcome with a hot drink and a chat over breakfast. There is then a 'thought for the day' from the centre leader. This short presentation on a biblical theme is followed by a range of 'breakout sessions' aimed at

helping the 'clients' in various practical ways, according to their needs. Some sessions offered help with job applications or managing money, while others supported those overcoming addictions. Craft skills and IT courses were also on offer. To ensure those attending were properly fed, the morning finishes with lunch.

Robert is keen to start running a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Debt Centre, which has helped many in difficult financial situations over a number of years. However, this requires both funding and training, so Hope Central would appreciate your prayers for this.

What a great organisation this is! When the restrictions imposed by Coronavirus are lifted and the centres are able to return to normal, please do consider volunteering. Robert and his team would love to hear from you. Each centre has a number of voluntary roles, from simply sitting and chatting with the clients or helping prepare the meals, to running the courses. All wonderful ways to serve others!



A symbol of a new life with God, and that we have also been 'resurrected' in a new life with Jesus

It means that we know Jesus is alive now, that he is with us and that he loves us

To know that as Jesus did rise from the dead, as a Christian, I can feel secure that one day I will be with Him in Heaven

His Resurrection means that the power of death has been defeated and he is with us now in every part of our lives, as he has been with Christians in the past and those yet to come.

That Jesus was who he says he was: the Son of God

Salvation!
Victory!
That God can do anything!

WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION MEAN TO YOU?

Confidence in our resurrection on the final day

Its part of who I am. It means I can live my life with hope, love and humility – and a bit of fear too – as I know I'll be found wanting

It means that when I'm at a believer's funeral I know that, because they are in Christ, they too will be resurrected to eternal life

God's authenticity stamp on the gospel promises

Jesus rose, Christians rise to life. It's the great hope of our eternity with the Godhead

It shows us there is life after death and that through the crucifixion our sins are wiped away and we should feel free of any guilt. The Resurrection is a joyful reminder of Jesus coming again and shows the purpose of his birth and life on earth.

I can have an intimate and loving relationship with a saviour who is still alive today

Resurrection means Hope. Without the Resurrection there is no life, and without life, there is no hope!

Confidence that Jesus will deliver what he said he will

We belong to a long line of God's family and can be confident in the way ahead because of the Resurrection

We invited members of our church family to share what the Resurrection of Jesus means to them, as they live out their Christian lives.

Jesus didn't want to die, but he was willing to die so that our sins could be forgiven

The proof of God's victory in achieving a restored creation, fulfilling his eternal purpose

It means that Jesus has conquered death for all of us who trust in him

God coming down to us to defeat evil and allow us to have a relationship with Him

Resurrection proves that Jesus has conquered death and so we have the promise of eternal life

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

News & updates from the St John's church family!



A recent photo of the church family together



A Friends International *Philip Project* weekend away in Hathersage that Simon was helping with, equipping international students to teach the Bible



We hosted some international scholars from Cambridge for their Christianity Explored weekend away. Here are some of their children enjoying Sunday Seekers



Our international visitors from Cambridge on a trip to Lyme Hall

LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

YOUTH, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: YEAR AHEAD

What would you like to be remembered for?

What mark do you want to make ?

What do you hope your descendants will say about you?

Perhaps it's my thrice daily dog walk through the graveyard that's got me thinking. I am intrigued looking at all the names, the briefest information about their lives displayed on gravestones, wondering what mark they made on the world or on their families. Have they left a lasting legacy? Do their great grand children know their name and talk about them still?

Psalm 78 has a great picture of a 'passing on' that has an eternal legacy. The psalmist urges God's people to "tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power and the wonders he has done." He has the long term in mind "so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children." This 'passing on' is not an end in itself - his ultimate aim is these generations "would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands."

We see the same pattern in the life of Timothy. Paul says " I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded now lives in you also.But as for you, continue in what you have

learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim 1v5,3v14,15

If granny Lois hadn't passed on to her daughter Eunice her faith in Jesus, and Eunice hadn't taught young Timothy the gospel, would Timothy have known how precious was the good news and therefore how important it was to guard the gospel? Youth and children's work has, at its heart, this passing on of the good news that leads to salvation. That can be by anyone who knows the Lord and his praiseworthy deeds - mums, dads, grannies, grandads, leaders, church members, teachers, godparents, neighbours. On the school run, in the bath, walking the dog, making biscuits, building Lego at all times and in all places - this significant, vital yet ordinary work is going on. In Sunday Seekers, Kid's club, Kairos , school Christian Union and assemblies an eternal legacy is passed on, not for our names to live on but for Jesus name's sake.



Leoni is our Youth, Children & Families minister here at St. John's

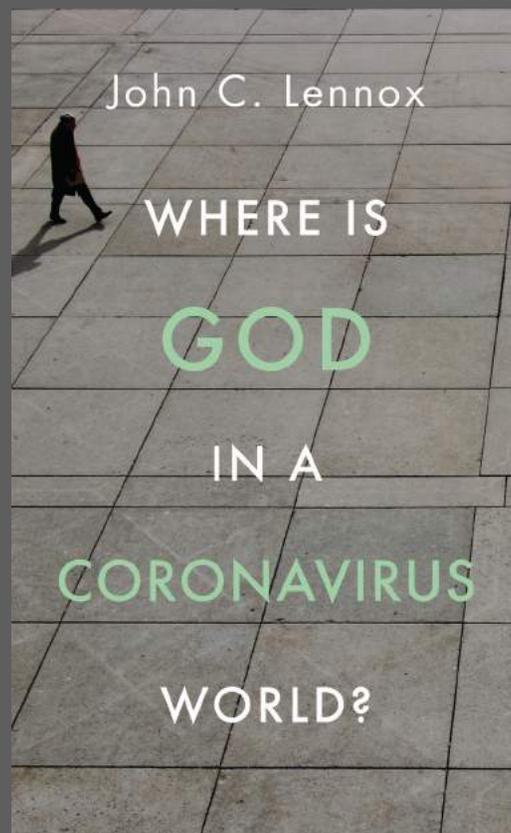
WHERE IS GOD IN A CORONAVIRUS WORLD?

How belief in a loving and sovereign God helps us to make sense of and cope with the coronavirus outbreak.

We are living through a unique, era-defining period. Many of our old certainties have gone, whatever our view of the world and whatever our beliefs. The coronavirus pandemic and its effects are perplexing and unsettling for all of us. How do we begin to think it through and cope with it?

In this short yet profound book, Oxford mathematics professor John Lennox examines the coronavirus in light of various belief systems and shows how the Christian worldview not only helps us to make sense of it, but also offers us a sure and certain hope to cling to.

Pick up a free copy of this just-published book from the porch of the church building (open 24/7).



BOOK REVIEW

Happily Ever After by Jonty Allcock

We all long for “happily ever afters. But let’s face it, life’s just not like that! Or is it?

This short book takes readers through the Easter story. Good Friday looked like a bad ending to Jesus’ story. But Easter Sunday changed everything...for everyone...for ever after! Readers will discover how Jesus’ happy ending can be theirs too as they explore how his life, death and resurrection solve the big issues that plague humankind—sin and death.

Easter really can change your life, for good, for ever after! Discover how Jesus’ happy ending can be ours too.

I really enjoyed reading ‘Happily Ever After’. It’s a lovely, light and easy-to-read book, starting almost immediately with Jonty Allcock’s childhood memories of a sports day, to illustrate the powerful Easter message.

It only took me an hour to read, so it’d be great to pass on to non-Christian friends.



June Powell

WHAT DOES THE RESURRECTION MEAN?

"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

Benjamin Franklin

Death is something we must all face, and we are reminded of this when attending a funeral or reading news of the latest tragedy. Death has this hold upon us and it will conquer us. It robs us of hope and leaves us with sadness and uncertainty. For many in society death is seen as the end and this life is all that there is.

Christ, like us, faced death, but He rose from the dead. This is a great victory; Jesus being greater than death means that it couldn't contain Him and He defeats it.

So what does the resurrection mean for us?

Without the resurrection of Christ our faith is in vain

"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." 1 Corinthians 15:14. If Jesus didn't come back from the dead then His claim to be God would be proven false and all of His promises brought into question. Because He rose from the dead and defeated death, we can have faith in Christ and trust in the promises He made. He told us in the gospels that He was going to rise from the dead and He did, keeping His promise.

The resurrection of Christ gives us hope

A hope that death isn't the end. For those who believe in God death is returning home to be with Him. We are told the dead will rise in Christ and live for eternity with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). This is what Paul is referring to when He writes "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Death according to the Bible is seen as a blessing to be with Christ.

The resurrection shows God is in control

Even when Christ died on the cross, God was still in control. If Christ escapes death, then it implies He got one over on death. If He is in control of the whole situation then death didn't have a chance and has no power over God.



The resurrection of Christ means Jesus is our intercessor

(Romans 8:34) We can approach God in prayer and He will listen, as Christ is our intercessor working between God the Father and us.

The resurrection of Christ means we will rise again

Christ conquered death and has victory over it. As believers in Christ we have no reason to fear death nor its sting. Of course, it brings sadness at the loss of a loved one and it doesn't remove heartache in this life, but we are given hope and faith that it's not the end because in Christ we will rise again and live with him for eternity.

Attaining such hope comes by faith in Christ. When the thief on the cross showed faith, Jesus responded with "today you will be with me in paradise".

SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMME

Sundays

10am

Lord's Supper on third Sunday

6.30pm

Lord's Supper on first Sunday

Homegroups

April 19th	Faith in the time of Corona "If God is in control..?" Matthew 6:25-34
April 26th	"Is this God's punishment?" Romans 1:18-32
May 3rd	"What would Jesus say?" Luke 13:1-5
May 10th	Faith in an Unbelieving World 'So...do you fit in?' Daniel 1
May 17th	A future and a hope Daniel 2
May 24th	Into the fiery furnace Daniel 3
May 31st	Who's the king around here? Daniel 4 & 5
June 7th	Obedying God rather than man Daniel 6
June 14th	The beast and beauty Daniel 7
June 21st	A vision to encourage Daniel 8
June 28th	'O Lord, hear and act!' Daniel 9
July 5th	The awesome vision Daniel 10 - 12
July 12th	A glorious task Get building! Haggai 1:1-15
July 19th	A house of glory Haggai 2:1-9
July 26th	Blessings for bad people Haggai 2:10-23

Whilst we are meeting online through Zoom, we will only be holding the 10am service.

Once government guidance allows it and we return to meeting in person, the Sunday evening service will resume.

Please check our website at www.saint-johns.org.uk for more details.

Meeting on Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, afternoons and evenings, to study God's work and encourage one another.

Faith in the time of Corona Matthew, Romans & Luke

Faith in an Unbelieving World: Daniel

During the summer our homegroups are linked to our Sunday series. Meeting weekly, the groups begin on 23rd April and finish on 9th July.

Dates given are Thursdays but some groups meet at other times. One week each half term will be a Prayer Evening (see website for full details).

Additionally, a women's bible study meets at 9.45am on Wednesdays, and a men's bible study meets at 6.30am on Fridays.

Monthly Prayer Events

25th April - Prayer Breakfast
21st May - Prayer Evening
6th June - Prayer Breakfast
2nd July - Prayer Evening

Special Events

For the foreseeable future, any St John's events will be running online via Zoom.

For course and event details, please visit www.saint-johns.org.uk and visit the 'What's On' page.