



Sunday 11th July

PREPARATION

Welcome

Leader Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

All and also with you.

Leader This is the day that the Lord has made.

All Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Hymn 870 Jesus is the name we honour

Jesus is the name we honour;
Jesus is the name we praise.
Majestic name above all other
names,
the highest Heaven and Earth
proclaim
that Jesus is our God.

*We will glorify, we will lift him high,
we will give him honour and praise,
we will glorify, we will lift him high,
we will give him honour and praise.*

Jesus is the name we worship;
Jesus is the name we trust.
He is the King above all other kings,
let all creation stand and sing
that Jesus is our God.

We will glorify...

Jesus is the Father's splendour;
Jesus is the Father's joy.
He will return to reign in majesty,
and every eye at last will see
that Jesus is our God.

We will glorify...

Opening activity 'The Repair shop'

Confession

God our Father,
we come to you in sorrow for
our sins.
For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will for our
lives;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,
without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.

For failing you by what we do,
and think and say;
Father, forgive us:
All save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn
away from you
by temptations in the world
about us;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

For living as if we were
ashamed
to belong to your Son;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

Absolution

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Collect (Prayer of the day)

Leader Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward 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.

All Amen

Everyday Faith Frank Davenport, All Souls

Hymn Nothing is too big for His power

Nothing's too big, big, big for his power
Nothing's too little, little for his care
Nothing's too big, big, big for his power
Nothing's too idly, widdly for his care
Nothing's too big, big, big for his power
Nothing's too incy-wincy for his care
Nothing's too big, big, big for his power
Nothing's too teeny-weeny for his care

He is God of the big, God of the little
God of the stuff somewhere in the middle
The King of moving mountains
Love's you more than you will ever know

Nothing's too big, nothing's too small
Nothing's too much, he cares for it all

Bible readings

Ezra ch1 ~ Claire Lee (All Souls')

1In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfil the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

2"This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

" 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. **3**Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem.

4And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.' "

5Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites –everyone whose heart God had moved–prepared to go up and build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. **6**All their neighbours assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings. **7**Moreover, King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god. **8**Cyrus king of Persia had them brought by Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

9This was the inventory:

gold dishes	30	10 gold bowls	30
silver dishes	1,000	matching silver bowls	410
silver pans	29	other articles	1,000

11In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and of silver. Sheshbazzar brought all these along when the exiles came up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Revelation 22.1-6 ~ Andy Holcombe (St Mark's)

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2** down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. **3**No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. **4**They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5**There will be no more night. They will not

need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

John and the Angel

⁶The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.

Sermon – Jonathan

The Repair Shop

Have you seen that wonderful programme ‘The Repair Shop’ where people bring in old, treasured, but damaged possessions to experts to be repaired? There is always a fascinating story behind each object, how important it was to a particular person and maybe how it came to be in disrepair. And the experts do an amazing job, identifying the problem, tracking down parts needed for repair and then lovingly and carefully restoring the object to working properly and looking good again.

Over the last few weeks we have been thinking about the New Normal for the people of Israel coming out of exile in Babylon and relating that to this phase in our nation’s life of as we come out of the effects of COVID-19 into whatever our New Normal evolves into. I’ve really enjoyed getting to know better this part of the bible from these less well-read books.

The situation of the Israelites reminds me of the Repair Shop TV programme. And I’m going to use three Rs to highlight this from the Israelites period in exile drawing especially on today’s passage from Ezra 1 and then see how it applies to us today.

Firstly, **recognising** brokenness and a need for repair

Secondly, **responding** to the brokenness by doing something to enable the repair

Thirdly, **restoring** that which was broken to something like it was before

Let’s start with **Recognising** brokenness. As we have highlighted over the last few weeks the relationship the Israelites, the people of God, had with their creator, their Father, had become broken. As a nation they had frequently worshipped other gods, gone against God’s commands and gone their own way. The prophets indicated that this led to their own brokenness as God allowed them to be invaded by Babylon, and their nation destroyed. Their magnificent temple, the place where God dwelt amongst them, which despite their unfaithfulness they still valued, was destroyed and ransacked by the Babylonians who also carried many of them off to Babylon, especially those who had power and influence.

Through words from God's prophets the Israelites began to acknowledge and recognise the reasons they were in exile and that it was not something they could do anything about and so they cried out to God.

However, despite their turning away from Him the Israelites were loved by God as his children and he couldn't leave that relationship in disrepair. So God **responded** to their recognition of brokenness by beginning a process of repair to both the relationship with Him and their situation in exile. Ezra 1 says how God was behind Persian king Cyrus' proclamation which would allow the Israelites to return to their homeland to rebuild their temple and settle back there. This fulfilled prophecies from Jeremiah he says, a reference to Jeremiah 50:9 and 51:11, as well as the one from Isaiah 45 that we looked at four weeks ago. These prophecies were to show that it was always part of God's plan. All the more remarkable because we have to remember that it was the Babylonians who had invaded Judah, but the prophecy referred to a Persian king, Cyrus, which was fulfilled when the Persians invaded Babylon and took over their empire.

But there also needed to be a response from the Jews in exile. Cyrus didn't force anyone to go, or give them an edict they had to go. It wasn't a form of ethnic cleansing, trying to rid the land of the Jews by telling them to go home, they had a choice. They could respond to the work of God through Cyrus and be part of God's plan for rebuilding their homeland or they could stay where they had settled for two generations. As hinted at in v5 clearly not all responded by joining the exodus.

Having responded to their need by enabling them to return to their homeland and rebuild their temple, in a wonderful act of grace God then enables a **restoration** of the glory of the temple. We'll look at the actual rebuilding of the temple a bit more over the next two weeks, but at this stage we should note the importance of the temple in Jewish life. It was highly significant because it was where God dwelt amongst his people, and what God wants more than anything else, as we see throughout the bible, is to dwell amongst us, to have relationship with us. During exile the synagogue system of local places to gather, worship and learn was created and they learnt that God was present everywhere even without a temple. But before exile the only real place of worship was the temple in Jerusalem, and so it was at the heart of their spiritual life and the first thing the Jews wanted to restore when they returned to their homeland.

Cyrus' heart is moved to proclaim in his edict in Ezra 1 that the local people are to provide the returning Jews with silver, gold, goods, livestock, offerings for the temple, everything they would need to make that temple special and help them set up home. Cyrus also returned all the

temple treasures to the returning Jews which had been ransacked by the Babylonians when they destroyed the previous temple decades earlier. What I love about this is that God's restoration was not minimal, the Jews were lavishly blessed with all that they needed and more so that the temple they would build could once again reflect something of God's glory. Last week when we looked at Ezekiel 36 Sam spoke of how part of why God restored the fortunes of the Jews, his people, was for the sake of His Holy name, his reputation, and we see that here as well in the provision of all they needed for the temple and their return. In enabling the temple to be restored to something of its former glory, God's holy name would be glorified, both through his using pagan leaders to enable his purposes and in providing the materials for a magnificent temple to worship him, where he would be physically present with his people one more.

That of course is the image in Revelation 22, that ultimate return of God's people from exile, estranged from closeness to God by the Fall, to the true promised land of the new heaven and new earth where God restores all things, including our relationship with him, where he will dwell forever with his people and be their light.

So here in Ezra we see God at work in his cosmic repair shop, recognising the problem, responding by enabling the repair and then restoring things to something of their former glory. We will see more over the next couple of weeks what the restored temple would look like: glorious, yet not exactly the same.

And how does this relate to the COVID pandemic and our returning to the New Normal? I would encourage you to think for yourself, but here are just a few pointers:

Firstly, I think we need to **recognise** a number of things. Not that this pandemic is necessarily punishment for turning away from God, but that we as humans are not masters of this world, only God is. We cannot prevent or instantly stop a pandemic. God has given us scientists, medical staff and politicians who can work together to minimise the effect, but we are not God, there is only one. We must recognise our limitations, our selfishness and sinfulness and our need of a close relationship with a divine saviour.

Secondly, we need to **respond** to this recognition of our limitations. We should humble ourselves, reflect on our lifestyles and our relationship with God. Are we giving him the glory he deserves in the way we live? Are we desiring him and trusting in him foremost rather than desiring the pleasures of this world and trusting in them which the pandemic has shown us are fleeting and unreliable?

Thirdly, as we return to a New Normal, we need to look at what God wants to **restore** in our lives and our churches. Now is a good time to reflect on our lifestyles. Have we been doing what God wants in our work, in our service to him and in our church life? Are there new things he has for us? Might his restoration be something of the past, but in a new way as I was talking about two weeks ago? And can we trust God, to do what he did for the returning exiles to provide what we need, for this restoration?

What needs repairing in your life? Recognise the problem, respond by bringing it to God in his repair shop and allow him to work with you to restore it to something wonderful that will bring him glory.

Hymn 579 Restore, O Lord

Restore, O Lord,
The honour of Your name,
In works of sovereign power
Come shake the earth again;
That men may see
And come with reverent fear
To the living God,
Whose kingdom shall outlast the
years.

Restore, O Lord,
In all the earth Your fame,
And in our time revive
The church that bears Your name.

And in Your anger,
Lord, remember mercy,
O living God,
Whose mercy shall outlast the
years.

Bend us, O Lord,
Where we are hard and cold,
In Your refiner's fire
Come purify the gold.
Though suffering comes
And evil crouches near,
Still our living God
Is reigning, He is reigning here.

Affirmation of faith (We stand to declare our faith)

**All We believe in God the Father,
 from whom every family
 in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
 who lives in our hearts through faith,
 and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
 who strengthens us
 with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 Amen.**

Prayers ~ Rosemary McCrum (*St Mark's*)

The response is:

Faithful God, hear our prayer

And glorify your name

Let us pray for our nation.

Heavenly Father, at this crucial time when decisions have to be made about how and when to lift the Covid 19 restrictions, give wisdom to the Prime Minister, to all elected representatives at Westminster and in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and to the scientists and medical professionals advising them, and enable them to balance the risks and make the best decisions for our nation. Thank you, Lord, for the success of the vaccines; we pray that sufficient supplies will be fairly distributed to all countries and that the spread of the virus will be brought under control.

As the end of term approaches, we pray that children and students, who have had such a difficult year, and their teachers, who have worked amazingly hard to provide both classroom and on-line learning, may have a good holiday and be able to return to schools, colleges and universities in September without further disruption.

We pray too for people returning to work after being furloughed, for businesses reopening and for those seeking new jobs. Lord, keep us all safe and guide us as we discover the "new normal".

Faithful God, hear our prayer

And glorify your name.

Let us pray for our Church

Thank you, Lord, for Jonathan and Sam and for all who share in the ministry and leadership of our churches. Guide and inspire them as they plan for the coming months. Show us all how our Church family can best work together to support one another and reach out in love to the community around us.

We ask your special blessing on Dean and the other ordinands, who were ordained deacon or priest last week, as they begin their new ministries in the diocese.

Faithful God, hear our prayer

And glorify your name.

Let us pray for peace in the world and for all who are suffering because of war, political strife and disasters.

Give wisdom, Lord, to the leaders of the nations and all in positions of authority, so that they may work together to restore peace and justice and strive to end poverty and oppression. Bring help and hope to refugees and to all who have lost homes, families and livelihoods or are imprisoned unjustly, through violence or oppression or as a result of wild fires and natural disasters. We pray too for the emergency services, aid workers and medical teams working to bring relief, and pray that you will keep them all safe.

Faithful God, hear our prayer
And glorify your name.

Gracious Lord, sustain and heal all who are suffering in body, mind and spirit. Give new hope to those who are depressed or lonely, worried about their jobs and businesses or fearful about the future. Comfort those who have lost family members and friends. Continue to inspire and strengthen all who are working towards the prevention of Covid 19 and who are caring for those who are ill.

We pray especially for those in our parish who are unwell:

Peter and Eileen Bliss, Patrick Chapman, Brenda Collard, Frank Davenport, Barbara Jones, Lynda Kirk, Barbara Lloyd, Trevor Lloyd, Doreen McKinnon, Olive Park, Denise Randall and Joy Storkey.

Faithful God, hear our prayer
And glorify your name.

Let us join together in the words of the Lord's prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, your will be done

On earth as it is 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 for ever. Amen.**

Notices *(See Notes & News)*

Hymn 445 Shine Jesus Shine

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, Shine....

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
So our faces display your likeness
Ever changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, Shine...

The dismissal

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

