

Easter 4 / 5 2020

<p>10th May Easter 4 / Easter 5 Marking 75th anniversary VE Day. 9.30 Holy Communion What we would have had.</p>	<p>OALMIGHTY God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. <i>Amen.</i></p>	<p>Genesis 8 vv 1-19 Psalm 31 vv 1-6 Acts 7 vv 54-60 I Peter 2 vv 1-10 John 14 vv 1-14</p>	<p>SoF 120 The Servant King The National Anthem 381 Make Me a Channel 127 Glorious Things 542 There is a Green Hill 415 O God our Help in Ages Past 390 Meekness & Majesty 64 Colours of Day</p>
<p>10th May Easter 4 / Easter 5 Marking 75th anniversary VE Day. 11.00 Holy Communion What we would have had.</p>		<p>Genesis 8 vv 1-19 Psalm 31 vv 1-6 Acts 7 vv 54-60 I Peter 2 vv 1-10 John 14 vv 1-14</p>	<p>A&MR 167 O Worship the King 577 The National Anthem 166 All People That on Earth Do Dwell 257 Glorious Things 214 There is a Green Hill 165 O God our Help in Ages Past 399 Alleluia Sing to Jesus 579 I Vow to Thee My Country</p>
<p>10th May Easter 4 / Easter 5 Marking 75th anniversary VE Day. Jubilee Hall 5.30 Evensong. What we would have had.</p>		<p>Deuteronomy 4 vv 23 – 40 p183 II Thessalonians 2 vv 1-17 p1189</p>	

The sundry and manifold changes of the world.

Friday 8th May is the 75th anniversary of VE Day – a solemn and a joyful commemoration. Various events were planned for the day both nationally and locally. We intended to mark it at our services in Church on the 10th, with special invitations extended to the parish councils, youth and other village organisations to join in. But it was not to be as we planned it. Covid 19 came along and we are still in lockdown.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus (late 6th century BC) taught that the world is always in a state of flux. Things are always changing. The way Plato explained Heraclitus' teaching was that you can't step into the same river twice. The water you paddled in ten minutes ago has flowed away down stream. You are now standing in what was upstream ten minutes ago! We've all seen lots of changes in our lives. Sometimes, change is something we regret. We can all sometimes sympathise with Henry Lyte's famous hymn, *Change and decay in all around I see*. Perhaps we could pause here for a moment and think of the changes that make us sad: bereavement, getting older perhaps, diminishing or missed opportunities, disease in ourselves or in our loved ones, days gone by that will not return.

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears,
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,

The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain hath bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends, so link'd together,
I've seen around me fall

Like leaves in wintry weather;
 I feel like one,
 Who treads alone
 Some banquet-hall deserted,
 Whose lights are fled,
 Whose garlands dead,

And all but he departed!
 Thus, in the stilly night,
 Ere Slumber's chain hath bound me,
 Sad Memory brings the light
 Of other days around me.

On the other hand, change can be very positive. There are things we look forward to, things we hope for, work for, aim for. Maybe we should take time here to thank God for the changes which we have experienced as blessings and to pray for the changes we should like to see and hope to see. S Paul looks forward to the greatest change of all in I Corinthians 15: ⁵¹ *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* ⁵² *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³ *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* ⁵⁴ *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* ⁵⁵ *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* ⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* ⁵⁸ *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* In Isaiah 65, God promises, ¹⁷ *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.* In the New Testament, S Peter takes up this theme (II Peter 3¹³): *Nevertheless, we, according to his promises, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

Sundry and manifold changes indeed. But what do we look for in the bad times and in the good? The collect teaches us to pray that, *our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found.* And where is that? When he was condemned by the authorities and about to be stoned, Stephen *looked up stedfastly into heaven.* It is in Christ that true joys are to be found. Heaven is our goal, our aim, our hope. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Thus He can say in John 14 to all of us: ¹ *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* ² *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* ³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* ⁴ *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* ⁵ *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?* ⁶ *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

In Psalm 31, the psalmist prays in faith to God to look after him. We read it today as far as v6, words Jesus quotes on the Cross and Stephen quotes when he is stoned and I quote when I switch off my bedside light every night before I go to sleep. God delivers Noah and his family, and by Noah's obedience and agency, the whole of creation from the Great Flood. S Peter speaks of us Christians as delivered from sin, the world and the devil by Jesus, to be the people of God and citizens of heaven, living on earth in obedience to God's commandments and with heaven as our goal: *Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; ; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found.*