



Sunday 13th June – Back to the Future

Welcome

Leader We come from scattered lives to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us.

Silence is kept.

As God's people we have gathered:

All let us worship him together.

Hymn O Lord my God (How great thou art)

O Lord my God,
When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the works
Thy Hands have made;
I see the stars,
I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout
The universe displayed.'

*Then sings my soul,
My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art,
How great Thou art.
Then sings my soul,
My Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art,
How great Thou art!*

And when I think,
That God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die,
I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross,
My burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died
To take away my sin.

Then sings my soul...

When Christ shall come,
With shout of acclamation,
And take me home,
What joy shall fill my heart.
Then shall I bow,
In humble adoration,
And there proclaim:
"My God, how great Thou art!"

Then sings my soul...

Opening activity Unexpected inventions

Confession

All **Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought, in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love, and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed, and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past; and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light. Amen.**

Collect *(Prayer for the day)*

Leader Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are
nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all
virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before
you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is
alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one
God, now and for ever.

All **Amen**

Poem by Eileen Bliss – St Mark's

There's a dark cloud hanging all over the world
And yet there's a new season being unfurled
Let us pray away our fears
And greet each season with happy cheers.

Everyday Faith *Lynda Salmond, All Souls'*

Song **O wow! what a God**

When I gaze up to the stars
When I see the light from planet
Mars
There's only one creator
When I watch the moon at night
When I feel the sun that's burning
bright
There's only one creator

So clap your hands and sing
Shout out and worship him
So clap your hands and sing
And let the praise begin

*Oh wow! What a God
Oh wow! What a God
There's no one like you
There'll never be another*

Oh wow! What a God
Oh wow! What a God
There's no one like you
There'll never be another
Awesome God

Look at all the animals
Look at all the places round the
world
There's only one creator
All the languages we're talking in
French, Spanish, Greek to Mandarin
Solo hay un Creador

You walked upon the earth you
made
Oh wow! Oh wow
You died and now we can be saved
Oh wow! Oh wow
You rose and left an empty grave
Oh wow! Oh wow
One day you're coming back again

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Bible readings

Isaiah 45:1-25 – Guy Quitmann, *All Souls'*

'This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to
Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue
nations before him and to strip kings of their armour, to open doors
before him so that gates will not be shut:

² I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates
of bronze and cut through bars of iron.

³ I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places so that you
may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by
name.

⁴ For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by
name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not
acknowledge me.

⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I
will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me,

⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may
know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.

⁷ I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create
disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

⁸ 'You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower
it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness
flourish with it; I, the LORD, have created it.

⁹ 'Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but
potsherds among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the
potter, "What are you making?" Does your work say, "The potter has no



hands”?

¹⁰ Woe to the one who says to a father, “What have you begotten?” or to a mother, “What have you brought to birth?”

¹¹ ‘This is what the LORD says – the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?’

¹² It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts.

¹³ I will raise up Cyrus^[b] in my righteousness: I will make all his ways straight. He will rebuild my city and set my exiles free, but not for a price or reward, says the LORD Almighty.’

¹⁴ This is what the LORD says: ‘The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and those tall Sabeans – they will come over to you and will be yours; they will trudge behind you, coming over to you in chains. They will bow down before you and plead with you, saying, “Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god.”’

¹⁵ Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself, the God and Saviour of Israel.

¹⁶ All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced; they will go off into disgrace together.

¹⁷ But Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation; you will never be put to shame or disgraced, to ages everlasting.

¹⁸ For this is what the LORD says – he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited – he says: ‘I am the LORD, and there is no other.

¹⁹ I have not spoken in secret, from somewhere in a land of darkness; I have not said to Jacob’s descendants, “Seek me in vain.” I, the LORD, speak the truth; I declare what is right.

²⁰ ‘Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save.

²¹ Declare what is to be, present it – let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but me.

²² ‘Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

²³ By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.

²⁴ They will say of me, “In the LORD alone are deliverance and strength.” All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame.

²⁵ But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the LORD and will make their boast in him.

Romans 13:1-7 – Kay Dodds, St Mark's

13 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.

Sermon – Mick Moorse

This chapter is about the greatness of God the creator and controller of the whole world and everything that happens in it.

This morning we are going to concern ourselves with just one of these happenings and it concerns the emperor of the mighty armies of the Medes and the Persians (*Isaiah 45:1*) "Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus". Cyrus was the emperor of the Medes and the Persians.

First let's put the chapter in context. It was addressed to the Jews who were in exile in Babylon, the nation of Israel, as a whole, had disobeyed God. They had not fulfilled the role for which God had called and chosen them, namely, to be a light to the gentiles. They needed to learn this afresh, God was for everyone not just for the Jews, defeat and exile was a good place to start "Therefore He brought against them the King of the Chaldeans" (*2 Chronicles 36:17*). Chaldeans was just another name for the Babylonians. They took Jerusalem and ransacked the city, they looted the temple and took the sacred vessels then they destroyed the temple, this is mentioned specifically in verse 19 "They burned the house of God". Then in verse 20 it says, "He took into exile those who had escaped sword". This defeat and particularly the destruction of the temple "the house of God" made them think it seemed as though God had deserted them.

These verses from Psalm 137 give us an idea of how they felt. “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion” (*Psalm 137:1*)

They had been defeated and were now in exile, they thought the exile would be short and God would rescue them and soon they would be back in Jerusalem, and their homeland. But they were mistaken. The exile was to be a long one, so the prophet Jeremiah wrote in a letter to them. We have it in Jeremiah 29:1-23. It pulled no punches, it told them that far from being a short exile it was going to last 70 years. So, they had better make the best of it. He told them to build houses, get married, in fact settle in and play a positive part in the community, “seek the welfare of the city” he said. A reminder to us that we are most effective, witnessing as Christians, when we are active in the community, the words “seek the welfare of the city” still apply. Some of the exiles certainly took Jeremiah’s words to heart. For example, Daniel and his friends took quite important jobs (*Daniel 2:48-49*). On the other hand, some may have become totally absorbed into Babylonian ways. However, the worship of the one true God was kept alive. For example, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to worship before the huge statue of Nebuchadnezzar even with the threat of the fiery furnace hanging over them (*Daniel 3:14*), this is just one example, there are many others which showed the worship of God persisted.

Towards the end of the exile there was a power struggle between the expanding empire of the Medes and Persians and the Babylonian empire. The Medes and Persians came out on top and took the city of Babylon. This meant of course that there was a new Emperor, Cyrus. Perhaps many of the exiles thought life would go on as before. But the new emperor brought with him a new policy. The new policy was unusual and unexpected. Cyrus issued an edict that stated all exiles from whatever country, were free to return to their own homeland and there worship their own god. This of course included the Jews. The 70 years that Jeremiah had predicted was up. The exile had finished, the Jews were free to return to their land. In addition, Cyrus gave back the vessels and treasures that had been looted from the temple before it was destroyed so that they could be used in the new temple when it was built.

This new policy, Cyrus regarded as his. He imagined that he had thought of it. But Isaiah 45 tells us differently. It was God’s plan, it had always been so, that’s why Jeremiah could prophesy that the exile would last 70 years. God was using somebody who didn’t worship Him or believe in Him. As it says in the chapter “I (God) equip you though you do not know

me” (*Isaiah 45:5c*). The whole of *Isaiah 45* is about God controlling world events, for many of the Jews this was new; God, working through godless foreigners in a foreign territory to further His purposes, no it surely can’t be possible but in fact Cyrus is called, in chapter 45 “God’s anointed one”.

This whole business seemed unlikely that some German theologians in the nineteenth century maintained that the bible was inaccurate, and that Cyrus never issued such an edict, however a clay cylinder was discovered by archaeologists on which was written this very edict in several languages. The cylinder is known as Cyrus’ cylinder, and so the bible was proved to be accurate.

So, the exile officially came to an end after 70 years with Cyrus edict, which perhaps taught the exiles that God rules the whole of creation not just the chosen people – the Jews. It is also a reminder to us that whatever happens in the world, and to us; God is in charge. We may not understand, and we may not be able to explain why things are happening, but we are not at the mercy of arbitrary events. God our maker is in control.

After 70 years of exile, we would perhaps think that everyone would jump at the chance of returning. But many had been born in Babylon. Some were too comfortable and making a long and hazardous journey and then to arrive at a broken sown city with a broken-down temple, this did not appeal.

But a returning party was organised and arrived at Jerusalem. The first thing they started work on was the temple. The rebuilding of the city had to wait. The returnees divided roughly into two groups. One group, often older people, looked back and wanted everything restored as it used to be. The second group looked back, but now they were in a new situation, it was pointless only looking back, it was important though to look forward as well. This division is illustrated in *Ezra 3:12* at the consecration of the new temple foundations “And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord... But many ... who had seen the first wept.”

The rebuilding was hard often unrewarding work and the project faltered at times, enthusiasm waned and had to be reignited by the prophets such as *Ezra*, *Haggai*, and *Zechariah*.

The Jews suddenly and unexpectedly found themselves in a post Exilic situation and they had to answer the question – How are we to deal with this situation? We, as a church, face a post pandemic situation.

How are we to deal with it?

I think it would be wrong to draw direct parallels between the two situations. But like them we are faced with a new situation. We have developed new skills, we've had new experiences, which have demanded a different approach. The question is, how can we use these skills and experiences? We may want to look back and go back, it may be necessary to do things differently. But the objective is the same "to be effective witnesses to God, and Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit". The leaders will have to make some very difficult decisions. We must remember to pray for them!

Hymn **King of Kings Majesty**

King of kings, Majesty
God of Heaven living in me
Gentle Saviour, closest friend
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end
All within me falls at Your throne

*Your Majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your Majesty*

Earth and Heaven worship You
Love eternal, Faithful and True
Who bought the nations, ransomed
souls
Brought this sinner near to Your
throne
All within me cries out in praise.

Your Majesty, I can but bow . . .

Affirmation of faith

Leader Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.**

Leader Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**All I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the Virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Leader Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?
All **I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers ~ Mark Grubb, *All Souls'*

Creator Lord, thank you for our beautiful world, we are surrounded by incredible diversity of life in all its forms.

The more we learn of your creation the more we understand how fragile it is and how much we depend upon even the smallest plants and animals for our existence. We know we have fallen short as custodians of this world and some of the damage we have wrought cannot be undone.

Guide and inspire our leaders to agree measures to protect our precious planet, the forests and the tundra, the mountains and the oceans, the rivers and the deserts.

We pray that leaders of companies, large and small, will understand and accept their responsibilities for the environmental impact of their organisations, that they will place the interests of the world ahead of those of maximising profits.

Father, to love your creation is to love you, help us all to recognise our own personal responsibility for the world around us and take ownership for our everyday decisions of what we use and what we throw away, how we travel and where we go.

Heavenly Father, open our eyes to see your gracious hand in all your works and teach us to be more responsible in our stewardship.

For the sake of him through whom all things were made,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**



Father God, we pray for health workers around the world. We give thanks for the incredible NHS staff here in the UK. Lord, sustain and keep them during these difficult times. We pray especially for the teams of vaccinators who are working long hours under great pressure to protect us from the scourge of Coronavirus. Maintain and protect them and give them energy and resilience as they work on the front line of this amazing programme.

As we anticipate the further easing of restrictions in the coming weeks, we pray for all those for whom the pandemic has brought catastrophic changes to their lives:

Those who have experienced long term illness or lost loved ones to the virus;

Those who have lost their jobs and become unemployed;

And those whose businesses have declined or failed.

Holy Father, bring them consolation and hope for a brighter future in the sure knowledge of your love.

Finally, we pray for ourselves as we weary of the restrictions on our lives and grow impatient for the many things we've not been able to do for over a year.

Enduring Lord, for whom a thousand years is but a day, help us to be patient and accepting of whatever form our lives take in the new normal to come.

Amen

Sovereign Lord, King of Kings, we pray for the leaders and delegates at the G7 summit will enable a green recovery for all and stand in solidarity with low- and middle-income countries through their discussions and decisions. Let all those attending come with a spirit of humility and compassion as plans are made to rebuild after the pandemic.

We pray for humility and compassion in discussions about tackling the biggest global challenges. We pray that these leaders would prioritise the well-being of those living in poverty, many of whom are already suffering from multiple crises, including climate change. We pray for courageous decisions to set in motion significant action to create a greener, fairer future for everyone.

We pray for bold, practical commitments to tackle climate change and injustice as we rebuild from the pandemic. Lord, we know there will still be much more to be done. We pray for leaders to build on the decisions made, increasing their ambition and turning talk into swift action.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Loving Father, we pray for children, teenagers and young adults as they try to cope with the challenges in their lives caused by the pandemic.

Isolation from their friends and normal activities for so many months, uncertainty over GCSE and A-Levels and how that will affect their future,

higher education courses that do not meet their hopes and dreams, difficulties finding jobs and perhaps facing unemployment.

Loving Father, we pray that our young people will know and feel the security that is their right.

We pray that they know and feel the love that is theirs through you.

Guide all who are a voice for children and young people to speak loudly and clearly

so that security and safety, love and hope might be the experience of all your children. For the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen

We pray for all those who sustain your Church in the Parish of St. Peter. We ask that you give inspiration and encouragement to Jonathan, Sam and all who minister to our needs, that they may teach with clarity and authority, care for those in need of your love and healing, and lead your flock through the challenges of this world.

Loving Father, we pray for those in need of our love and care in our parish, especially:

Mary Angus, Eileen & Peter Bliss, Patrick Chapman, Brenda Collard, Gloria Johnson, Barbara Jones, Linda Kirk, Barbara Lloyd, Trevor Lloyd, Doreen McKinnon, Denise Randall, Jacquie Still and Joy Storkey.

We pray that they may find comfort and healing in your love.

Through Jesus our Lord, **Amen.**

The Lord's prayer

Leader As our Saviour has taught us so we pray.

**All 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 for ever.**

Amen.

Notices – see N&N

Hymn **He's our rescuer**

*He's our rescuer,
He's our rescuer
We are free from sin forever more
Oh how sweet the sound
Oh how grace abounds
We will praise the Lord our rescuer*

There is good news for the captive
Good news for the shamed
There is good news for the one who
walked away
There is good news for the doubter
The one religion failed
For the Good Lord has come to seek
and save

He's our rescuer . . .

He is beauty for the blind man
Riches for the poor

He is friendship for the one the world
ignores
He is pasture for the weary
Rest for those who strive
For the Good Lord is the way,
the truth, the life
Yes the Good Lord is the way,
the truth, the life

He's our rescuer . . .

So come and be chainless
Come and be fearless
Come to the foot of Calvary
There is redemption
For every affliction
Here at the foot of Calvary x2

He's our rescuer . . .

The Rend Collective

Closing Responses

| | |
|------------|--|
| Leader | Jesus, Lord of time, |
| All | hold us in your eternity. |
| Leader | Jesus, image of God |
| All | travel with us the life of faith. |
| Leader | Jesus, friend of sinners, |
| All | heal the brokenness of our world. |
| Leader | Jesus, Lord of tomorrow, |
| All | draw us into your future. Amen. |

Blessing

| | |
|------------|--|
| Leader | Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing ... |
| All | Amen. |