Wednesday Morning Service, 28th April 2021

**Readings:** Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 15: verses 20-28

**Reflection**

We have a continuation of Paul answering those who are sceptical about the resurrection of the dead by appealing to the solidarity of the believer, for some members were denying that there was any physical resurrection in the future. Furthermore, it was unclear how the resurrection of Jesus applied to them, the Corinthians; Christ’s triumph over death appeared to be nothing more than the private victory of one individual. But If there is no resurrection, then Paul points out that Christ has not risen, and hope in him is empty.

If we have no continuation of life through resurrection, then having learned the present joy of Christian living, we then lose it all in death. Therefore, we are more to be pitied than those, who have never known Christian joy in this life and have less to lose.

To help them believe Paul describes Jesus being the first fruit of a mighty harvest. In the Book of Leviticus Chapter 23 verses 10 and 11, are these words: “The Lord said to Moses…“When you enter the land I am going to give you, and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord, so it will be accepted on your behalf; and the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath.”

So here in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians he brings in this illuminating description of the first sheaf of the harvest being offered to the Lord. Jesus is the first fruit of a mighty harvest moving forward through the sequence of Christ’s work to the final day when “God will be all in all”.  Paul makes it clear that in Christ they have hope, which will take them through this life and beyond it.

Paul is responding to those who wonder how a believer can be “in Christ” and giving an example that would have been familiar to any convert having the most casual acquaintance with synagogue discussions or Hebrew Scriptures in verses 21 and 22: “For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive”  To be “in Adam” meant humanity participating in the destiny of the old Adam; whereas to be “in Christ” means to share in the power and glory of the new creation.  Paul is stating that Christ is not just an example of, but the gift through which we all share in the resurrected life of Jesus.

The more we discover of God, the more we realise there is to discover and the deeper our relationship with God. the greater our understanding of the riches that may be ours.  In all our dealings with God there are always new depths to discover and heights to ascend; there is always a sense of beyond. We are often only aware of God’s presence and glory in hindsight; indeed, we may go through an experience and only later realise how good God has been to us; how He was with us all the time, alongside us.

We need always to allow God to help us communicate His love to others, to share the presence and power of the risen Lord, that they may discern His love for them.  Yes, we need to tell others of the Risen Christ and not be afraid to pass on the Good News for all to hear..

“Disturb us Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves, when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little, when we have arrived safely, it is because we sailed too close to the shore.” (attributed to Sir Francis Drake)

What is God saying to you through these readings and reflection?

What does God want you to do about it?

**Collect for last Sunday- 4th Sunday of Easter**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life of all who put their trust in him: raise us we pray, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that we may seek those things which are above, where he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

**Intercessions**

Lord Jesus in those days of wonder after Easter, you called Mary and Peter by their names, and they recognized you; and we too draw near to hear our names spoken in love and to know you again.

You broke bread with your followers on the road to Emmaus, and in the blessing, they recognized you; and we too come to share your blessing and your broken life, and to know you again.

You spoke peace to your disciples, showed them the marks on your hands, sent them out to bear witness to your risen life; and we too come seeking peace, seeking to bear witness and to be sent out renewed.

Come among us now; that we may recognize you in each other, and together know your healing and hope. Amen.

Lord you are the Lord of life, in your presence is the fullness of joy.

Lord, we pray for the roads in our Parishes: Bourne End - Sugar Lane and Lauries Close and in Sunnyside - Upper Hall Park and Hall Park Hill that all who live and pass by there may acknowledge your blessings in their lives.

We pray for our neighbours, friends and community.  We give thanks for those who share their lives with us.

Give comfort and strength to all who are ill, all who are anxious. We pray for those known to us who are finding life difficult and distressing.

We give thanks for our hospitals, hospices and nursing homes, and  the support and love of all those in their care.. We pray for all those countries in our world where there is great need and suffering naming them in our hearts.

We pray for those who are anxious that they might know your peace and your strength through difficult times.

Lord, we remember so many parts of the world striving for freedom and seeking to bring about change, relieving poverty and inequality..

Lord we pray for those who have lost faith in themselves or in the world around them.

The risen Lord gives new strength and offers all people new life and peace. The joy of the resurrection be yours, the power of the risen Lord protect you. The peace of the Lord of life give you wholeness. Amen.