

24th May

**May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

As you walk today, try and keep your house always insight.

- Is it possible?
- How do you feel about being told to limit your walk?

Read Acts 1:4-11

⁴While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

This is the last time Jesus is physically with his disciples and he leaves them with instructions of what to do next. He has told them not to leave Jerusalem until they are filled by the Holy Spirit, then they are to go and be witnesses to the city they are currently in and the surrounding areas. Jesus leaves them looking up to heaven, when two men in white robes appear and tell the disciples Jesus will return. Although Jesus has asked his disciples to stay in this uncertain and potentially dangerous place, he tells them it is for a good reason, for in their waiting they are going to receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Have you ever been left with a job to do?
- Where you able to complete the job?
- What helped you to do this?

Recognise those times when you have waited and give thanks for the gifts that you have received in those times.

Activity: Ascension and Aldersgate

On the 24th May 1738 John Wesley had a heart warming experience, as he experienced God's love in a personal and life giving way. The disciples having experienced Jesus' ascension into heaven have been given hope in his return and them being filled with the Holy Spirit.

WHAT are you grateful to God for this week?	WHEN and where have you encounter God?
WHY do you come to church?	WHY do you believe in God?
HAS God ever rescued you?	HOW does God show you his conditional love?
WHERE do you see God at work?	HOW/WHERE does God 'speak' to you most clearly?

24th May The Way of Light Week 6

On the night of 24th May 1738 John Wesley heard Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans which emphasises the saving grace of God and found his heart strangely warmed. Methodists remember Aldersgate Day 24th May, because it not only shaped the life and ministry of John Wesley, but also the entire Methodist movement from that time until today. It not only marks the spiritual experience of John Wesley, but it calls us to worship the God who still "strangely warms the hearts" of all who place their trust in Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Let us pray

O Lord God almighty, we praise and bless your holy name for all your goodness and loving kindness to humanity. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and for your unceasing generosity to us throughout our lives; but above all, we bless you for your great love in redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.

We bless you for bringing us safe to the beginning of a new day. Grant that this day we do not fall into sin or run into any kind of danger. Keep us we pray, from all things hurtful to body or soul, and grant us your pardon and peace, so that, being cleansed from all our sins, we might serve you with quiet hearts and minds, and continue in the same until our life's end, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen

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| 1 Where shall my wondering soul begin ?
How shall I all to heaven aspire ?
A slave redeemed from death and sin,
a brand plucked from eternal fire,
how shall I equal triumphs raise,
or sing my great deliverer's praise ? | 3 And shall I slight my Father's love ?
Or basely fear his gifts to own ?
Unmindful of his favours prove ?
Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,
refuse his righteousness to impart
by hiding it within my heart ? |
| 2 O how shall I the goodness tell,
Father, which thou to me hast showed ?
That I, a child of wrath and hell,
I should be called a child of God,
should know, should feel my sins forgiven,
blest with this antepast of heaven ! | 4 Outcasts, to you, yes, you, I call,
Christ's love invites you to believe !
He spreads his arms to embrace you all ;
sinners alone his grace receive :
no need of him the righteous have ;
he came the lost to seek and save |
| 5 Come, O my guilty kindred, come,
groaning beneath your load of sin !
His bleeding heart shall make you room,
his open side shall take you in ;
he calls you now, invites you home :
come, O my guilty kindred, come ! | |

Charles Wesley (1707–1788) *Written following Charles Wesley's conversion experience on 21st May, 1738.*

Reading Acts 1:1-11

Today is also Ascension Sunday (the Sunday closest to Ascension Day) we remember the disciples witnessed Jesus being taken up to heaven in a cloud and two men telling them that Jesus would return in the same way that he left.

Before Jesus left, he told them to remain in the city, in the place where they locked the doors, the place where not long ago Jesus had been judged and sentenced to death, full of those who felt threatened by Jesus' words and ministry. Here Jesus wanted them to stay until the coming of the Holy Spirit.

With the current conditions around the world, where many nations have asked their residents to stay at home, this might feel like a relatable moment. The disciples were not told how long 'soon' would be. Although we have daily updates, still time is an unknown factor in our current situation. But just like the disciples we cannot know or maybe we cannot understand the true meaning of time. However, we do know that know like the disciples, that the sitting and waiting will come to an end and that will be with the power of the Holy Spirit. For the disciples that would be the sign for when they were to go and be witnesses first to Jerusalem and then onwards through Judea and Samaria.

I find this a very powerful, for Jesus is asking the disciples who have been afraid and locked away to speak to the place where they have found fear. The place where some witnessed Jesus' death as well as going back to the places that Jesus ministered. Although the call to the disciples in Matthew's gospel is to go to all nations, Luke here, says that it is also a local calling. Talk with the people around you. Those in your neighbourhoods, those who have watched you come and go, or sit in your garden, those who have delivered your shopping or called you up.

Although they had to wait, they were able to prepare themselves a little. I know you can't prepare for everything and nor should you, but having a goal, something to aim for can keep us looking forward and not upwards. Something that the disciples were left doing, when the men in robes appeared. Jesus might be putting his feet up, for a time, but he didn't want the disciples to be standing still staring upwards, he wanted them to hear the call and be looking forwards and moving onwards. The time will be coming when we will be once again be in closer contact with the world, what do you want the world to hear? What might you need to prepare? Where have you witnessed God in this time of waiting?

Time of Prayer

Almighty God, in a time of great need you raised up your servants, and by your Spirit inspired them to kindle a flame of sacred love which leaped and ran, an inextinguishable blaze.

We pray today for all those who need to feel the warmth these flames of your love.
For those in sickness or sorrow today, we pray for the comfort of your Holy Spirit.

We pray for those who are dying this day, that they too may know the truth of Wesley's final words, Best of all God is with us.

Grant that all those whose hearts have been warmed at these altar fires,
being continually refreshed by your grace, may be so devoted to the increase of scriptural holiness throughout the land that in this our time of great need, your will may fully and effectively be done on earth as it is in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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1 Christ is alive ! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.

Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

2 Christ is alive ! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
but saving, healing, here and now,
and touching every place and time.

3 In every insult, rift and war,
where colour, scorn or wealth divide,

Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, where even hope has died.

4 Women and men, in age and youth,
can feel the Spirit, hear the call,
and find the way, the life, the truth,
revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

5 Christ is alive and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise. Brian Wren (b. 1936)

A final prayer written by John Wesley

Now, to God the Father, who first loved us, and made us accepted in the Beloved;
to God the Son, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood;
to God the Holy Ghost, who sheddeth the love of God abroad in our hearts, be all love and all glory in time
and to all eternity. Amen.

Blessing

And may God fill you with hope, Jesus leave you looking forward and the Holy Spirit be the long awaited
gift that enables you to witness to your neighbours and community with and through the amazing grace
that warms and stirs our hearts. Amen.