



Welcome to our All-Age Service, prepared by Mervyn and Kathryn

For the Cause *Getty Music*

For the cause of Christ the King
We give our lives, an offering
'Til all the earth resounds
With ceaseless praise
To the Son

For the cause of Christ we go
With joy to reap, with faith to sow
As many see
And many put their trust in the Son

Chorus

*Christ we proclaim
The Name above every name
For all creation
Every nation
God's salvation
Through the Son!*

For the King once lifted high
To cries of rage, of crucify!
Endured the cross
As every sin was laid
On the Son

To the King who conquered death
To free the poor and the oppressed
For lasting peace
For life and liberty
In the Son

Let it be my life's refrain
To live is Christ, to die is gain
Deny myself, take up my cross
And follow the Son

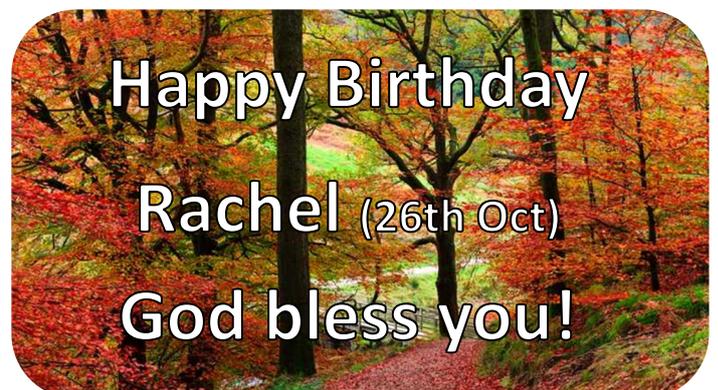
Thursday 5th November

Prayer Meeting and Communion

Croftlands Community Centre
at 6.30 pm. Government guidelines
observed, booking essential.



**Father God, thank you that you call us into relationship with yourself and welcome us into your family. Help us to hear your call through Jesus afresh today, and enable us to respond with all our hearts. Empower us to follow you in the way of love that blesses others and leads us into life in all its fulness. In Jesus name we pray,
Amen.**



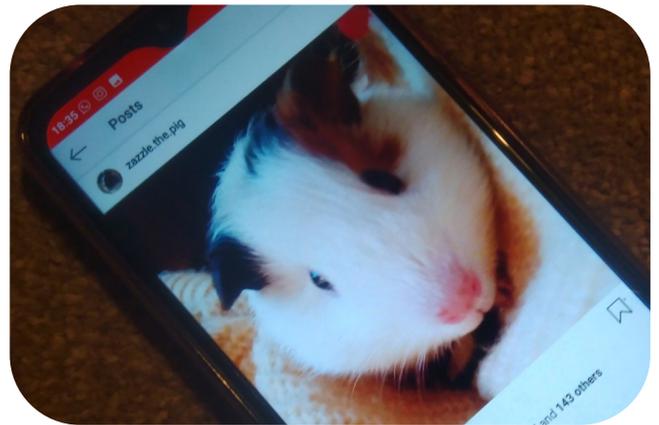
Human beings in general are followers!

We follow people for many different reasons; maybe someone seems to have a definite sense of direction or a natural ability that we admire. Sometimes we may follow someone because we want to be liked by them, or we aspire to become more like them, or maybe we want to be accepted and fit-in with their social group. Sometimes, we might follow someone with a magnetic, charismatic personality, even though it may take us to places that we feel aren't right or make us uncomfortable. Following someone else can be a positive thing if it encourages us to achieve new things or motivates us to work harder or go to places we wouldn't have otherwise gone.

People follow all kinds of people, for all kinds of reasons, some helpful and positive, and some perhaps not so helpful.

We have never seen 'following others' so clearly demonstrated than in the world of social media, whereby people are able to follow and engage with the posts, articles, images and updates of people they are following on a massive scale. Even Hattie's guinea-pig has it's own Instagram account, and to date has nearly 4000 followers!

Jesus Christ calls us to engage as a follower of him, but...



- ◆ **Who is this man?**
- ◆ **Is he trustworthy?**
- ◆ **Is it a good thing to follow Jesus?**

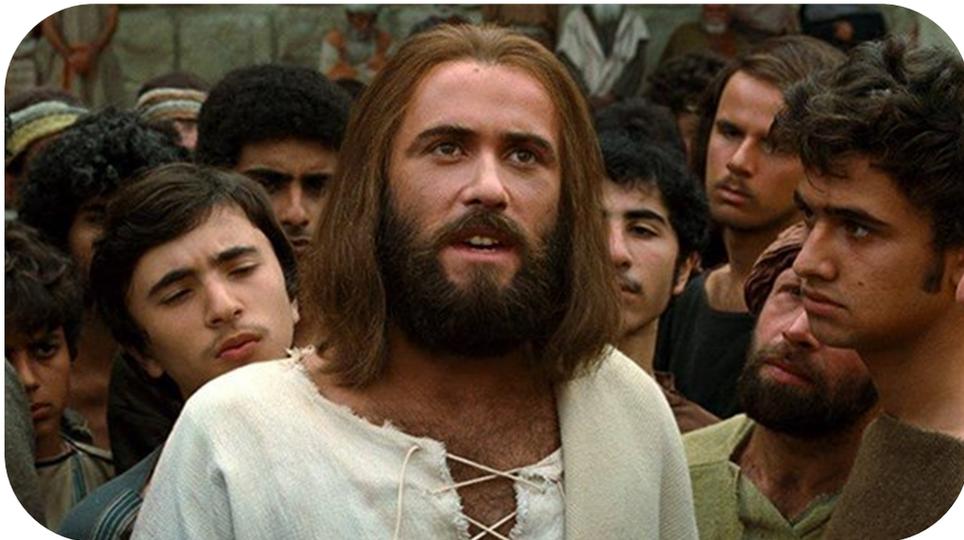
In today' service, we are going to ask three questions about Jesus.



1: Who is this man?

Firstly, all the writers of the History books agree that Jesus was a real person, who lived in Israel 2000 years ago. Some think he was a great teacher and leader, but was he more than just a teacher and a leader? Certainly, many people followed him and still do!

Lots of people, even when Jesus was alive had questions about who he was.



Who is this man? We know where he come's from We know his parents..... he's nothing special, he's just from Nazareth..... He speaks lies because he says he has come from God... he can't be from God, he breaks the rules Who is he.... Perhaps he's one of the prophets come back.... Maybe Elijah or Jeremiah.... Who is this man?

Jesus said something quite incredible about who he was. He said that He was the Son of God and that he was going to die and then he would come alive again. Was he telling the truth? Yes, Jesus was who he said he was, and he did die when he was about 33 years old, and he did come back to life again. No-one else could do that.

So, who is this man, Jesus? He is the literal son of the supreme God of the universe. By coming to live on the earth he was being like a bridge between the great and awesome God and us, so that we could follow the son of God and know God for ourselves as we follow his cause. That is incredible!

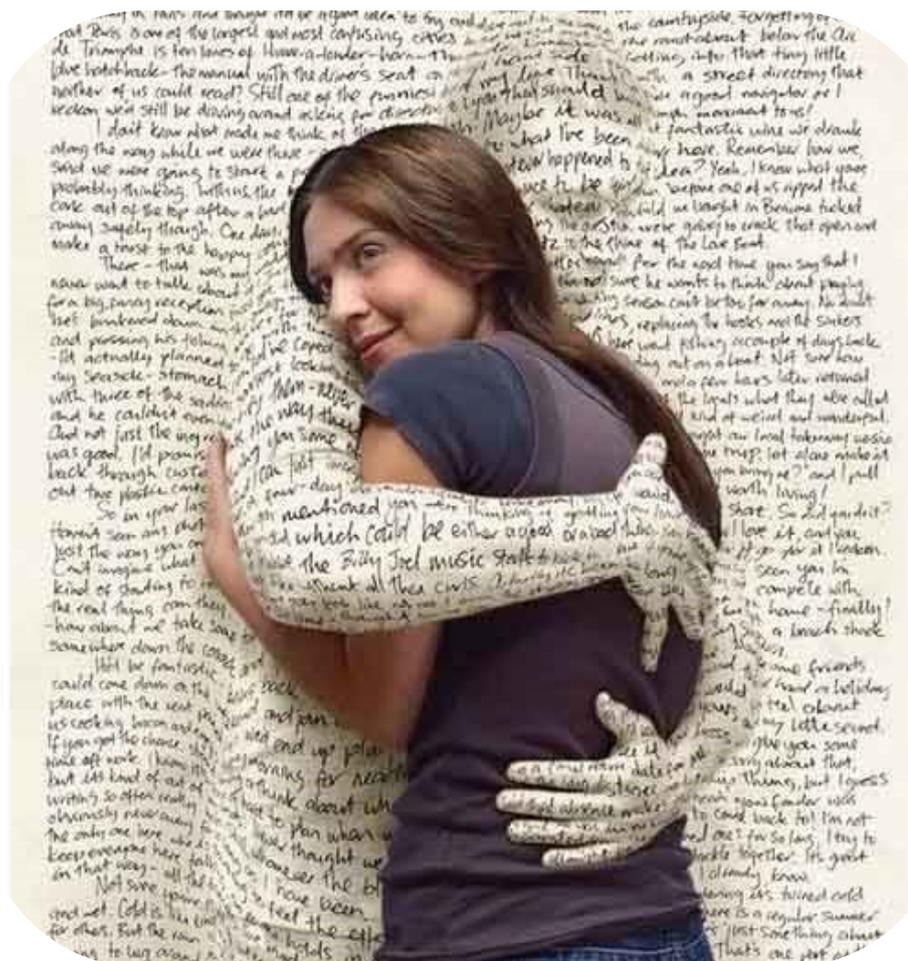
Here are some amazing verses from Colossians Ch1, just one of many passages that try to capture the wonder of who Jesus is!

¹⁵⁻¹⁸ We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—*everything* got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

18-20 He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so roomy, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.

21-23 You yourselves are a case study of what he does. At one time you all had your backs turned to God, thinking rebellious thoughts of him, giving him trouble every chance you got. But now, by giving himself completely at the Cross, actually *dying* for you, Christ brought you over to God's side and put your lives together, whole and holy in his presence. You don't walk away from a gift like that! You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted. There is no other Message—just this one. Every creature under heaven gets this same Message. I, Paul, am a messenger of this Message.

Colossians 1: 15-23, The Message



2, What can Jesus do?

Firstly, there is nothing that Jesus **cannot** do! As the Son of God, he has all the power of his Father and the authority of his Father over absolutely everything! Jesus explains that he does exactly the same things that his Father does, so when we look at Jesus and the things that he does and says, we see what God is like.

John 14:9-11 Niv

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me...

Our first reading reminded us that everything was made through Jesus, and is sustained by God through Jesus. He has complete power over the natural world. We read stories of him telling wild, windy stormy seas to be quiet and calm down, turning ordinary water into the best wine, multiplying a small picnic to feed thousands of people.

Stories about sickness and disease healed when Jesus is around, demonic powers and evil spirits having to run for it, new life flowing powerfully back into people who had died, even if they had been in a grave for three days!

There is nothing that he cannot do, but the most amazing thing he can do is this... He can forgive our sin.



Sin includes all the things in our lives that we say, do or think that keeps us anxious or worried, and stops us from being the people God originally designed and planned us to be. All the stuff that makes us feel far away from God, guilty, ashamed and is damaging to ourselves, to our relationships and to other people. Stuff that starts to control us and keeps tripping us up over and over again, even though we don't want to do it. Sin is very powerful, but God is more powerful and through Jesus, he can forgive our sin, not only that, he can break the power of sin in our lives.

If there is a particular sin that is controlling your life, firstly be honest with God and tell him that you are struggling and that maybe part of you finds it comforting and doesn't want to give it up, even though you know it's destructive. It's also a really good idea to find someone that you trust who can pray with you and keep you accountable and help you take steps to cut off the sources of temptation or find a positive way of handling situations that are unhelpful.

1 John 1:9, NIV: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

There is uncontainable power in the name of Jesus. He is the source of all life and he chose to give up his life and allow himself to take the blame and pay the price for all our sin, so that we can be forgiven and set free from the power of sin. That's why he came to earth. The King of all Kings became a servant King not just to be a great leader, teacher and example, but to give his life as a sacrifice for us and then to rise up from the dead, so that we can take up the offer of Jesus to follow him in a new life that starts now and continues into ever more real, glorious, overflowing life!

3, How do we follow Jesus?

Firstly, before we can wholeheartedly begin to follow Jesus, for many of us there is a big barrier to overcome and it's this.....we have believed lies, often without realising it and we find it impossible to believe that God could really love me. If we don't know that God really loves me, then we can't show it to other people by living a life of love like Jesus did and so we find it very difficult to follow in his footsteps.



There is an enemy who wants us to believe that we are too worthless to be loved and that God isn't loving or good and can't be trusted.

That enemy is called Satan or the devil, the Bible also calls him a liar....

John 8:44 tells us that **‘there is no truth in him and that lies are his natural language.**

You may know the story way back in the beginning when Satan, the liar appeared to the first human beings Adam and Eve in the form of a snake in the garden of Eden and caused them to doubt that God was good. The snake tricked them through his lies which led them to dis-obey God with catastrophic consequences.

In order to follow Jesus, the first thing we need to know without a shadow of a doubt is that God doesn't tell lies. The Bible says it is impossible for God to tell a lie. When God tells us that he loves us, he absolutely means it, and that includes you. When he say's that he has forgiven us, he is telling the absolute truth. **John 6: 37** tells us that **‘anyone who comes running to God will never be turned away’**.

So, here's what you can do: make a decision to believe what God says about you, even if it doesn't feel true. As you keep believing the truth, your feelings will change and the lies will begin to fall away.

As we begin to experience the amazing love of God in our lives, then Jesus wants us to follow in his steps by loving other people. The greatest commandment after loving God first is to love our neighbours in the way that God has now taught us to value, respect and love ourselves properly.

In Luke chapter 10, You can read a story that Jesus told when someone wanted to question what loving his neighbour really meant. In this story Jesus is telling us that if we follow him, then he wants us to show his love to all people, people who we naturally would avoid because we might think we are more important, or people who are different than us with different customs that we don't feel comfortable with, people who we think are undeserving, people on the fringes of society.

Let's recap our 3 questions about Jesus:

Who is this man? He is the Son of God who came to earth, gave up his life and rose from the dead.

What can he do? He can do anything and is in charge of everything, but the greatest thing he can do is forgive our sins and set us free from the power of sin.

How do we follow Jesus? We believe that God tells the truth and he is good. We choose to believe that he loves us, and we begin to love other people whoever they are, as we begin to build our lives on that firm foundation of God's love.

