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| Sermon |
| Year C Easter 7, 1st June 2025 |
| Sermon….. Life is a rollercoaster, God’s invitation into love and unity, as we too journey heavenward.  On Thursday in the church calendar we celebrated Ascension, which tells the story of when Jesus ascended into Heaven to be with the Father, 41 days after his resurrection on Easter Sunday. And promising to send the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples, (which we will celebrate at Pentecost – next week, so no spoilers)!  Today we hear Jesus praying for the disciples and for all believers, and we are invited into that same journey heavenward. As he prays for love and unity with and in humankind. That, just as the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father, Jesus prays that we too would live in them and them in us, sharing in that gift of unity and love.  And it’s the journey we all take through this life, and heavenward, I’d like to reflect on today. Because as our reading from Acts reminds us, as we hear about Paul and Silas (who were staked by a vocal demonic spirit, arrested, beaten and thrown in prison); life isn’t always easy.  Yet through their experiences we see God at work, as we find them offering powerful testimony about God. Not in what they said, (we hear nothing about the woman who followed them around being converted), not in displays of power (as Paul cast out the demonic spirit, and the earthquake released the doors and the chains); but in acts of love….  Having been flogged, chained up and in prison, (and not for the first or last time), we hear how they prayed and sung hymns to God from their cell, so that all those around them could hear. Then later when the earthquake struck and all the doors flew open, and the chains fell from all the prisoners. Still they stayed….. And not just Paul and Silas, did you spot, ALL the prisoners stayed!…  Their testimony of love and praise and faithfulness was so powerful that the jailer, who remember when he thought they’d escaped, was so distraught he considered suicide; instead became a believer, and he and his whole household were baptised!  It is the kind of love, the love of God living in them, that was an answer to Jesus’ prayer – as the world around them did indeed believe.  It is the kind of divine love that gives freedom from fear, even in the most awful of circumstances.  And indeed, for most of us life can be much like a rollercoster ride, full of ups and downs.  Now, some people like rollercosters. My husband and kids do, they are heading off to Alton Towers later this month. They relish the thrill of travelling up just to end up speeding downwards to the ground, or around in a loop. I wonder about each of you?...  Of course in modern rollercoasters you are surrounded by amazing technology and engineering designed to keep you safe. And it is in the knowledge of all that security you can enjoy the ride. Going faster than you ever have been before, experiencing the adrenaline rush, the wind in your hair.  In the gospel reading, when we hear Jesus pray, it was ahead of what would be a significant run on life’s rollercoaster, for Jesus and the early church. There would be celebration on Maundy Thursday before he is betrayed, is arrested, flogged, and killed on the cross on Good Friday, he is buried, before being resurrected on Easter Sunday and later ascending into heaven.  But despite what is about the happen Jesus prays, and as we listen in, we are reminded that we ARE loved completely, by God, JUST AS God loves him. And, like Paul and Silas, in that love we are invited to have God live in us; Father Son and Holy Spirit. And we can have confidence, that with God living in us – the beginning and the end of all things – we need not fear the journey.  Let’s take a little time now reflecting on those parts of our journey through life that can be a little scary, on our own. And rest a moment in God’s love living in you, as you lay it at the foot of the cross. |
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