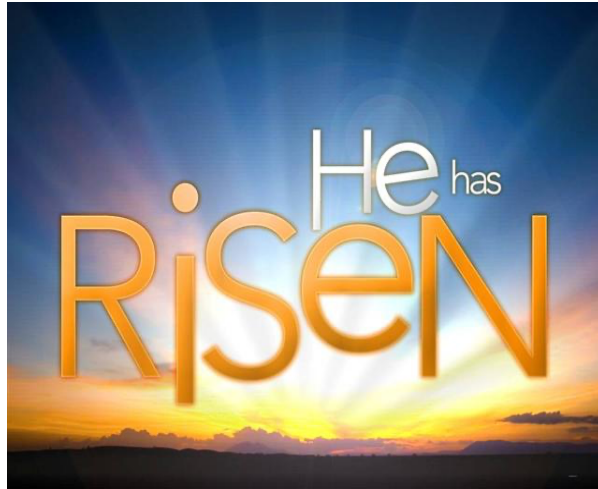


Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading  
Worship Service 10:30AM 12 April 2026  
Jill Bird leading & Rev. Zoltan Biro preaching  
[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk)  
Find us on Facebook @Abbey Baptist Church, Reading



Easter isn't over!! We have entered the season we call Eastertide, which is the 40 days after Easter up to the Ascension of Jesus back to heaven, described in the beginning of Acts. We read that during these days, he appeared to many, at different times, teaching them and speaking about the kingdom of God. Wouldn't you have loved to have been there?

So as we gather today we again celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's say it together several times

**Christ is risen. He is risen indeed**

**Christ has risen from the dead, he is alive for evermore**

#### **HYMN 1224**

The greatest day in history  
Death is beaten, You have rescued me  
Sing it out, Jesus is alive  
The empty cross, the empty grave  
Life eternal, You have won the day  
Shout it out, Jesus is alive He's alive

And oh happy day, happy day You washed my sin away  
Oh happy day, happy day I'll never be the same  
Forever I am changed

When I stand in that place  
Free at last, meeting face to face  
I am Yours, Jesus, You are mine  
Endless joy, perfect peace Earthly pain finally will cease  
Celebrate, Jesus is alive He's alive

#### **MP 99:**

Come on and celebrate! His gift of love, we will celebrate -  
The Son of God who loved us And gave us life.  
We'll shout Your praise, O King, You give us joy nothing else can bring;  
We'll give to You our offering In celebration praise.

Come on and celebrate, Celebrate, celebrate and sing,  
Celebrate and sing to the King. Come on and celebrate, Celebrate, celebrate and sing,  
Celebrate and sing to the King!

## Spoken together as a declaration

He is Lord, He is Lord He is risen from the dead And He is Lord  
Every knee shall bow Every tongue confess  
That Jesus Christ is Lord

You're my Lord, You're my Lord  
You are risen from the dead and You're my Lord  
My knee will bow, My tongue will confess  
That Jesus Christ is my Lord

## FAMILY TIME The cross and the empty grave

### Bible Reading 1. Luke 24. 33-44

*An offering will be taken during the following song. Then the teenagers and children will leave for their groups)*

### HYMN MP 633

Thank You Jesus, thank You Jesus, thank You Lord for loving me.  
Thank You Jesus, thank You Jesus, thank You Lord for loving me.

You went to Calvary, there You died for me,  
thank You Lord for loving me.  
You went to Calvary ....

You rose up from the grave, to me new life You gave,  
thank You Lord for loving me.  
You rose up from the grave....

You're coming back again, and we with You shall reign,  
thank You Lord for loving me.  
You're coming back again...

### BIBLE READING 2 Colossians 1. 1-2 and 4.7-18

### HYMN MP 1076

Jesus be the centre, Be my source be my light, Jesus

Jesus be the centre Be my hope be my song Jesus

Be the fire in my heart Be the wind in these sails  
Be the reason that I live, Jesus, Jesus

Jesus be my vision Be my path be my guide Jesus

## SERMON Rooted in Christ Series Christ in Colosse (Week 1) Colossians 1:1–2; 4:7–18

Today we're beginning a new series called Rooted in Christ. Over the coming weeks, right up to Pentecost, we'll be walking through Paul's letter to the Colossians and letting it do what it was written to do: to anchor ordinary believers in the sufficiency of Jesus.

Our key verse for the whole series is **Colossians 2:7:**

***“Rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith... and overflowing with thankfulness.”***

And these are the topics we will be covering in the series:

- Being filled with Christ

- The power of the risen Christ
- The price of being in Christ
- Our freedom in Christ
- Our new life in Christ
- Our fellowship in Christ

As we go, we will keep remembering this: the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead is at work in his people, growing roots where we might only see fragile stems.

**Opening illustration:** Imagine I brought two plants: one in a pot with a healthy root system, and one that looks green but has been pulled up—roots exposed, soil falling away. The rooted plant is stable; you can move it and it keeps growing. The uprooted plant might look fine for a day, but it won't last.

A Christian not rooted in Christ may look fine for a while, but when pressure comes, they wither. So, what are you rooted in right now, Christ, or something else? This is the question we will try to challenge you during the coming weeks.

## I. The context of the letter

### 1) Paul's ministry at Ephesus

Acts 19 tells us Paul taught in the Hall of Tyrannus for two years, so that "all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord." This wasn't occasional preaching. It was steady, intentional discipleship. Paul didn't only make converts; he made disciples, and then he sent them out. Think of a gym membership. Going once a month doesn't change your body, but daily training transforms you. In the same way, roots grow through steady, repeated contact with the truth.

### 2) Epaphras: a local leader who cares for his church

It's very likely that a young man called Epaphras came to faith during Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Colossians 4:13 describes him as diligent and hard-working. He goes back home and helps plant churches in Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. Later, when Paul is imprisoned, Epaphras travels to visit him, not for himself, but to give assistance to Paul and seek help for the church he loves.

### 3) The town of Colosse: overlooked, but not forgotten

Colosse sat in the Lycus valley (in modern-day Turkey). In the fifth century BC, Herodotus described it as large and significant, known for wool production. But by Paul's day, road networks had shifted and Colosse had declined into a small market town. One of the commentators tells us that it was the most insignificant church Paul has ever written to.

This however teaches us that God loves to work in overlooked places, and we should never underestimate what God can do in a "small" church, or in a life that feels unseen.

## II. The church at Colosse

### 1) A healthy beginning

Paul has heard that this is a fellowship marked by faith and love (Col. 1:8). It sounds like a growing church with a family atmosphere, something we long for in our own church at Abbey too. Simon will explore this topic further next week. Alongside those strengths, however, there were also pressures and confusion beginning to creep in.

### 2) The problems in Colosse: subtle false teaching

Unlike in letters such as Galatians, Paul doesn't pin a neat label on the false teaching here. Instead, he gives us clues, enough to see the pattern. The false teaching in Colosse is not an obvious rejection of Jesus, but a subtle addition to Jesus.

- **Hollow and deceptive philosophy** (2:8): ideas that sound deep, but are empty, like a beautifully wrapped box with nothing inside.

- **Ritualism** (2:11, 14, 16–17): trusting external practices (circumcision, law, holy days), as if wearing the gear makes you part of the team.
- **Worship of spiritual powers** (2:15, 18–19): treating other “spiritual experiences” as *necessary* alongside Christ.
- **Asceticism** (2:20–23): punishing the body to achieve holiness—like polishing the outside of a broken engine.

Put it together and you get what we might call **syncretism**.

It means: **Christ + something else = salvation**.

But Paul’s message throughout Colossians is simple and strong: Christ is enough.

Imagine you’re given a life jacket that truly works. You don’t add swimming bricks to “improve” it, you don’t add barbed wire to it, to keep away the sharks, you don’t even add swimming noodles to it... you just trust it. Adding to Christ doesn’t make salvation safer; it undermines the One we’re meant to rely on. Modern “Christ +” thinking can look like: Christ + success, Christ + self-help spirituality, Christ + good works, Christ + cultural approval. So the question for us today is: **what are we tempted to add to Christ?**

### III. Why Paul writes

1) **To encourage**. Paul begins by naming what God is already doing among them. He sees the good and strengthens it. This approach teaches us that we have to encourage as readily as we critique.

2) **To anchor them in Christ** (Col. 2:7). A tree with deep roots doesn’t fear the storm; shallow roots are easy to uproot. Are you putting roots down through scripture, prayer, and fellowship, or are your roots shallow only focusing on your physical wellbeing.

3) **To correct false teaching**. Truth matters. A small error in a GPS route can take you miles off course, and a small alteration of the gospel can quietly reshape a whole life. (example: **God loves the righteous... God only loves the righteous... God therefore hates the unrighteous God wants the righteous to stop the unrighteous**)

### IV. Paul’s relationship with the Colossians (Col. 1:1–2; 4:7–18)

The closing greetings show something beautiful: the church is a network of people, not just a place. Paul highlights that his co-workers who stood rooted in Christ contributed much to the growth of the church.

1. **Tychicus** (4:7–9): the trusted messenger who carries the letter and strengthens the connection with the wider church (including the letter to the Ephesians). We have different roles in the church, some local others in a wider capacity.
2. **Mark and Justus**: among Paul’s few remaining Jewish co-workers. Mark is especially striking, because he was once a disappointment to Paul, now restored and useful again. Failure is not final in God’s kingdom, restoration is always possible.
3. **Nympha**: a woman whose home becomes a meeting place for the church. This is a reminder that the early church spread through ordinary people opening their lives to God. Could your home, your table, your time be used to spread the kingdom of God. Are you available to God?

### Conclusion

Paul sees the best in people, and he calls the church to grow together for the glory of God. A forest doesn’t grow from one tree, but from many trees together, roots intertwined beneath the surface. That’s the church.

So, as we begin this series I would like to invite you:

1. Be rooted in Christ. Daily time with him is not optional, it’s life-giving.
2. Guard against “Christ +” thinking. Christ is sufficient.
3. Invest in others. Be an Epaphras to someone.
4. Value every role in the church. You matter in God’s mission.

5. Build a loving community. Faith and love must go together.

Let's pray that God would put deep roots down in us, so that when storms come, we stand, and when others are weary, we can hold them up.

**HYMN MP 799**

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing You, Jesus Knowing You  
There is no greater thing You're my all, You're the best  
You're my joy, my righteousness And I love You, Lord

Now my heart's desire is to know You more  
To be found in You and known as Yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of righteousness

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings  
To become like You in Your death, my Lord  
So with You to live and never die

**PRAYER OF INTERCESSION Peggy**

Almighty God, thank you for sending your one and only son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins and to teach us the ways you like us to be – to love one another, so that everyone will know we are the disciples of Jesus Christ.

The world we live in today is full of conflict, the new war in the Middle East has been ongoing for more than a month. People living in the region are in distress and fear, many have lost their lives or been separated from their families. People in the wider nations are anxious of further escalation of the war, on top of supply crisis and the cost of living.

May you grant wisdom to leaders in the world, soften their hearts, and bring peace to the region. May you heal those who are injured, comfort those who have lost their families and friends, and calm those who are worried.

**God, you are our refuge and our shield, we put our hope in you. Amen.**

Lord God, you are caring and loving. May the example of Jesus Christ enlighten our Government and politicians, to bring unity to our society and heal the broken systems.

In particular, we pray for patients that they are able to receive the needed care during this time, when resident doctors are on strike.

We pray for our young people, that they are able to follow Jesus Christ' teaching to do good and set a good example to their peers during this time, when there are calls on social media targeting teenagers to mobilise for anti-social behaviour.

We pray for the Abbey family. Lord, we lift our Iranian brothers and sisters to you, please comfort their hearts during this tough time and ease their worry for their family's and friend's safety. We lift those who are ill to you, especially our sister Gwen. May you bring them healing and relief them from stress and pain.

**God, you are our strength and our shield. God, have mercy, hear our prayer. Amen.**

**HYMN MP 689**

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;  
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,  
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,  
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;  
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;  
let the Church with gladness songs of triumph sing,  
for her Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.  
Thine be the glory...

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:  
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.  
Thine be the glory...

#### **BENEDICTION Colossians 2.6**

**May we all have accepted the Lord Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. May we continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith and overflowing with thankfulness by the power of the risen and present Jesus. Amen**

#### **THE GRACE**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, Amen.

□

#### **Events to highlight next week:**

Wednesday 15th April 10.30 Renew  
12.00 Bible study  
2.00pm God loves you series 1  
2.00 First Steps  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 10.30 Toddlers  
Friday 17th April 4.30 Table Tennis  
Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April 10.30 **Worship and Communion Colossians series**  
12 noon **First Steps Sunday class** restarts with Lesson 1  
Great time to join and find out more about being a Christian - let  
Angel or Stephen know you would like to join  
12 noon **Cantonese bible study**

**QR Code for Financial Offering:**

