

HE IS RISEN – HALLELUJAH!

Tony

Scriptures

1 Corinthians 15:12-55

John 20:10-16

As I write today, Christian believers around the world are focussing their thoughts on the suffering of Jesus on the cruel cross of Calvary, but we do this, knowing that on Sunday we will focus on the Resurrection of Jesus and His many appearances to His followers.

Resurrection was an issue amongst Jewish leaders before Jesus was born. The Pharisees believed firmly that every Jew who died would be raised to appear before God, to be allocated to eternal life with God or in hell without Him. The Sadducees, who were diplomats and politicians, had no time for resurrection.

There are many references to resurrection throughout the Bible. It is the clear teaching of Jesus, as well as many biblical writers, that all will rise whether saved or unsaved. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that He had overcome death. Those who rise with Jesus will have resurrection bodies; Paul writes about the nature of those bodies, and most of his teaching is to be found in 1 Corinthians 15:12-55, a long passage, but worth reading and thinking about.

This afternoon we have attended the "Stations of the Cross" service at our church. The service traces the pathway Jesus was forced to walk on His way to Calvary. Each reading of Scripture is followed by singing an appropriate hymn and a time of meditation. As 3pm approached, the Rector moved to a large candle, and when the correct time came, he snuffed out the flame and the light had gone. What a powerful picture of the unfulfilled hope of many who had expected such great things of Jesus. In Bread of Life last week we read about all that was achieved as the perfect sacrifice was paid. Sin had been conquered. Today, we focus on the achievement of Jesus when He arose and death was conquered.

In John 20:10-16 we read a remarkable account of Jesus' resurrection and how it was revealed to the disciples. At the time of His death, most had returned to their own home, disappointed and afraid. However, one returned after the Sabbath. Mary came to the tomb and discovered it was open, but the body of Jesus was gone. She didn't seem surprised to meet two angels, or by the question asked by someone she presumed to be the gardener. She had come with one aim – to find the body of Jesus.

During His three year walk with the disciples, Mary had noted Jesus' words. He told them what lay ahead for Him and for them. She came looking for His body when others went home perplexed. She waited and, suddenly, Jesus spoke her name.

This Easter many of us feel uncertain about the world in which we live. We have lived through two Easters locked down by Covid, and, this year, we are in the hands of a megalomaniac who may well use nuclear weapons to prove himself the greatest leader in the world.

Let us turn to God and simply wait as Mary did. Ask Him for mercy, and maybe, like Mary, we shall hear Him speak our name and find the peace that He alone can give.

Prayer: Dear Lord, there are so many things happening today that we don't understand and it is all too easy to become afraid, as the disciples did when they had watched You die. We cry out to You for mercy for this beautiful but broken world which You created, and may we look to the day when You will return. With the hymn writer we sing , "Hasten, O Father, the dawn of the day. When this new song Thy creation shall sing, Satan is vanquished and Jesus is King." Amen, so be it Lord.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlqcBEcWpQw&t=48s>