

Easter Sermon 2020

Written and Delivered by Revd Ross Meikle

I can't get back to sleep. The women woke me as they were getting ready to go back to the tomb with perfumes and spices. O to be a woman and to actually have a purpose at this weird time. They're our essential workers, performing sacred funereal duties, whilst the rest of us must stay at home. It's not safe outside. For us or for anyone.

We've been in lockdown since Thursday night. Like, it's only the third day and I'm going kind of crazy. It's exhausting, doing nothing and adjusting to this weird new way of being. This whole house is filled with grief and trauma, and we're all so tired.

...

The women returned from the cross and we sat around them as together they told us what had happened. The walk to Golgotha and the man called Simon who got pulled in to help. The way Jesus' clothes were torn and gambled away. The crown of thorns and the sign that read King of the Jews. They told us what his final words were... they couldn't quite agree on that point. Something he had said was My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? ...

We all feel somewhat abandoned at the moment.

I barely left bed yesterday, to be honest. I tried to get up and have something to eat but I was given bread and wine - usually a very ordinary meal - but I just burst into tears because it made me remember him. One of the last things he had said to us was to remember him when we ate bread and drank wine, that it was his body and his blood, and the horror of my imagination of what his body endured and how much blood was spilled. I went back to bed and wept.

Do this in remembrance of me.

He knew he was dying. But he talked too about New Life. That on the third day he would... come back...

That would be today, I guess. Friday, Saturday, Sunday. What a start to the week that would be.

But what if he did come back to life. What if Jesus rose from the grave?

Then I would get out of bed and go to my window, and cry out at the top of my voice: JESUS IS ALIVE!

And I'd put on my best jacket and get myself out of this upper room and go downstairs knocking on the doors as I went to tell everyone that: JESUS IS ALIVE!

And I'd go outside and into the streets - and there'd be champagne and chocolate and celebrations and I'd announce to the world that JESUS IS ALIVE!

And I'd go around and decorate the town with flowers, greeting everyone as I went telling them that JESUS IS ALIVE! HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!

And eventually the whole world would know. In every corner of the world, it would be known that Jesus is alive!

But that wouldn't be what would happen if Jesus was resurrected to new life today. We wouldn't go out. We couldn't. It still wouldn't be safe.

The temple leaders would be out to get us. The Romans would try and kill us. If Jesus did come back, we couldn't scream it from the rooftops. It would start small. We'd tell one another and we'd rejoice in quiet. We might need convincing. Some kind of evidence. We might need to see him for ourselves... he may not want to see us though... after all, we did abandon him.

But then we would meet and share the good news. We'd gather and tell his stories and teachings. We would travel from town to town, telling everyone this good news - always telling the tale of Jesus of Nazareth who conquered the grave and who taught us to love.

And perhaps one day, we'd write it all down. All his stories in all the world - though I suppose there wouldn't be enough books in all the world to contain everything that he did!

And so the story of Jesus would be preserved and passed down from generation to generation so that one day every tongue on the earth will confess that Jesus is the Messiah and that Jesus is Lord - the only Lord worth our service and our love.

It would be like a candle passing the light to another, and another. Until the whole world through all time and space would be alight with the fire of God's good news!

And maybe years down the line - Maybe centuries or millennia! - there will come a time when those who know the good news will find themselves like me now. Afraid and with good cause to stay inside.

But they will have the stories of Jesus - of his miracles and his parables. They will have his teachings of love and his scoldings of us disciples who kept on getting it wrong. They will have the telling first told by our women of his death. And they'd have the record of his rising, however it should happen.

And maybe it would give them hope.

Hope because death gives way to new life.

Hope because the darkness does not overcome the light.

Hope because Love Never Ends.

...

I could do with some hope like that right now, but alas. Jesus is well and truly sealed in his tomb. Jesus is dead, and the years I spent following him have been in utter vain.

...

Oh, I can hear the women back from the tomb. They're making quite the racket. I'm going to go down and see what all the fuss is about.