

Resurrection Sunday – 12th April 2020

What will we see when the dust settles? (After the Darkness Light)

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10, 1 Corinthians 15:57

CHRIST IS RISEN

HE IS RISEN INDEED

- “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light: on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” - Isaiah 9:2

This prophecy needs to be linked in with well-known Latin phrase that became popular in the 1500's... Post tenebras lux. When I taught Church History this was one of my favourite quotes to come out of the Reformation.

This Latin phrase is translated as *Light After Darkness*. The phrase was adopted by John Calvin's followers and subsequently was adopted as the motto of the entire Protestant Reformation. John Calvin's adopted city of Geneva, Switzerland. As a mark of its role in the Calvinist movement, the motto is engraved on the Reformation Wall, in Geneva, and the **Huguenot Monument, in Franschhoek, South Africa.**

This for me, is one of the powerful victories of Easter Sunday. After the darkness of Tenebrae and the Cross, we now get to celebrate the LIGHT of Jesus Christ. This means for you and I, that if we live as EASTER PEOPLE, we get to live in the hope that this saying is true for our lives. POST TENEBRAS LUX – after Darkness there is always light. When the sunset's in our lives become a 'dark night of the soul' we need to hang in there, because the dawn is coming. Light will always follow darkness. We believe this because of Jesus' resurrection.

- LIGHT CANDLE and PRAYER

Have you noticed before that Matthew's Gospel speaks about 2 powerful earthquakes?

1. **Matthew 27:51-54** – this happens as Jesus dies.
2. **Matthew 28:2** – When the angel breaks the Tomb open.

Two clear acts of God that end up speaking a powerful message then and I believe even now. The first earthquake told us that the darkness of sin had taken the life of the Son of God. The second one reminded us that the power of sin and death wasn't strong enough to keep Jesus in the grave – there is nothing compared to the Glory and Triumph of God.

Our World has not been the same since those 2 powerful Earthquakes! Just like our world will not be the same after the Corona-Pandemic has ended. We would be silly to carry on as

“normal” – just like I would like to argue that it would be silly of us to ignore the impact of those two earth shattering moments in Jerusalem around 2000 years ago.

The world would be a very different place if Jesus had not risen from the grave - There would be no Christian movement if it weren't for the Resurrection.

✠ **1 Corinthians 15:7** - "AND IF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS FUTILE AND YOU ARE STILL IN YOUR SINS..."

We would still be trapped in our sins – with no escape route

The Cross says our SINS being paid for, but the Resurrection SHOUTS out LOUDLY, that even though our Saviour was killed and buried in a borrowed Tomb, he did not remain there. Jesus was dead, but now He is alive. He is Risen!

“But now in a single victorious stroke of life, all three – sin, guilt, death – are gone, the gift of the Master, Jesus Christ. Thank God!” – **1 Corinthians 15:57** (MSG)

THIS DAY, the RESURRECTION is such an incredible day that we need to realise that it holds the foundation of our Christian Faith. No Cross and No Resurrection, then NO point in being a Believer. The impact of the Resurrection is even felt by people who consider themselves to be non-believers:

“I am an historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history.” - **H.G. Wells**

“...when He said He himself would rise again from the dead, the third day after He was crucified, He said something that only a fool would dare say.... unless He was sure He was going to rise. No founder of any world religion known to men ever dared say a thing like that!” - **Wilbur Smith**

“Suggesting a married Jesus is one thing, but questioning the Resurrection undermines the very heart of Christian belief.” - **Dan Brown**

After the fear, sadness and confusion of Good Friday, we come to the Euphoria of Sunday. Just as the Israelites tasted their freedom as they headed from 40 years of Lockdown (slavery), so the disciples experienced New Life and we too can experience the power of the Resurrection.

This has huge implications for us, but often we live as if we are still in the mourning state of Friday. To use the phrase from Trevor Hudson, “**We need to be Easter People, living in a Good Friday world!**”

There is a lot of heartache and pain, sadness and loss, depression and despair, weeping and hopelessness, in our world at the moment. In fact, these are all of the kind of emotions that

the disciples experienced at the Cross, the day Jesus died. But, the Resurrection has changed all of that and we are the people who need to be the one's bringing the complete story of Easter into a world trapped at Good Friday!

We are going to briefly look at 4 Implications for our lives.

1. Jesus keeps his promises

He had told the disciples beforehand that he would rise after 3 days and now he was keeping his promise – they hadn't believed him or understood him.

- **Luke 23:44** – “This is what I told you while I was still with you.”

It is interesting that the Pharisees had cottoned on to what Jesus had promised, but the disciples were slow to believe him. The reason the Pharisees order the Tomb to be securely shut and guarded was because of Jesus prophecy of rising after 3 days.

- **Matthew 27:63-64** – “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, “After 3 days I will rise again.” So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.”

Joshua 23:14 - "Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good **promises** the LORD your **God** gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

Are we sometimes too slow to believe the promises of Jesus? Had God given you a promise and we are not willing to accept it?

2. Jesus came to Mary in her tears

“Woman, why are you crying?” – **John 20:13, 15**

Firstly, the angel addresses her in the midst of her tears and then it is Jesus who speaks to her.

Let's be honest and say that there are many brave men in the world. Men who will climb mountains, swim in the oceans, run across deserts and do all kinds of incredible things. However, let these men face a women in tears and it is enough to render most men helpless. It is one the most powerful weapons a women has.

This time, though, Mary is truly gutted by what she is witnessing. The only person who believed in her and who literally saved her life, was murdered two days ago and now when she comes to pay the proper respects to him, someone has taken his body away. It is too much for her to handle.

However, Jesus is not afraid of her tears and he speaks to her directly.

This brings hope for all of us, because in the midst of my brokenness and tears, I need to turn to someone – Jesus is the one I can turn to.

3. Jesus still moves stones (Max Lucado)

We must remember that the Women who went to the tomb that morning were not going to see Jesus alive – they were quite expecting to see his body lying in the tomb. That’s why they were bringing burial spices. However, as we have seen God surprises them in a huge way.

- **Mark 16:3** - "MARY WHO IS GOING TO REMOVE THE STONE -- HOW CAN WE GET INSIDE TO JESUS IF THE STONE IS IN THE WAY?"

And when they got there, the stone had been rolled away by the earthquake.

This is a timely reminder for you and I that we worship a God who is a God of miracles. When we realise that we can’t do something, we then fall back into the competence of God. With our Lord, all things are Possible!

So, maybe we are facing a huge Boulder in our lives, something that is looming large before us and we don’t know how on earth we will get this thing to move. In our human capability we will never get it too budge, but we need to trust in the supernatural ability of God.

If he moves a stone for the disciples in that time, he will move boulders for us in this time!

4. We mustn’t selfishly hang into Jesus for ourselves.

When Mary suddenly realises who Jesus is, she turns around to him and cries out ‘Rabboni!’ (Teacher!) – **John 20:16**

You can bet that she didn’t just stand there and call this out, but that she gave Jesus a massive hug. Wouldn’t you if you suddenly saw someone you loved, who you thought you had lost? So, she gives him a massive hug and then Jesus says this:

“Do not hold onto me....go instead and tell my brothers and tell them...” (**John 20:17**)

I am not sure how this doesn’t play out in real time – I don’t think Jesus told Mary to “practise social distancing” or “call her out on the 2 meter rule” – I want to think that Jesus hugged Mary for a few moments, but then he needs to tell her something important. In the original text, there is a strong possibility that he means,

“Don’t hang onto me selfishly!”

In other words, you can't have me only to yourself you know – you need to tell the others. Which Mary eventually does, although many of them don't believe her at first.

This implies the same for us - We need to go and tell the others. Sure they may not suddenly ask you to pray the 'sinner's prayer' with them, but it is our calling to go and tell the others.

D.T. Niles – “one beggar telling another beggar where they can find some bread.”

We are not telling everyone how to believe, we are just inviting them and come and experience what we have seen and experienced ourselves.

MAX LUCADO, in his book, *Six Hours One Friday*, tells the story of a missionary in Brazil who discovered a tribe of Indians in a remote part of the jungle. They lived near a large river. The tribe was in need of medical attention. A contagious disease was ravaging the population. People were dying daily.

A hospital was not too terribly far away—across the river, but the Indians would not cross it because they believed it was inhabited by evil spirits. To enter the water would mean certain death. The missionary explained how he had crossed the river and was unharmed. They were not impressed. He then took them to the bank and placed his hand in the water. They still wouldn't go in. He walked into the water up to his waist and splashed water on his face. It didn't matter. They were still afraid to enter the river. Finally, he dove into the river, swam beneath the surface until he emerged on the other side. He punched a triumphant fist into the air. He had entered the water and escaped. It was then that the Indians broke out into a cheer and followed him across.

That's exactly what Jesus did! He told the people of His day that they need not fear the river of death, but they wouldn't believe. He touched a dead boy and called him back to life. They still didn't believe. He whispered life into the body of a dead girl and got the same result. He let a dead man spend 4 days in a tomb and then called him out and the people still didn't believe Him. Finally, He entered the river of death and came out on the other side.

No wonder we celebrate the Resurrection!

“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.” - — C.S. Lewis

This is why I believe in the Resurrection friends – not because I can fully understand it, but because I believe it has transformed my life and changed who I am. I am restored into the image of my Creator – sure it may be taking a little longer than some of you saintly people out there, but my Encounter with Jesus will continue to change who I am.

Prayer:

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you; wherever he may send you;

May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.”