

EASTER SUNDAY 9th April 2023.

Scripture: Luke 24:1-12

This morning we know that God did the impossible by raising His son Jesus from the dead to live again.



That is what we celebrate today on Easter Sunday that Jesus is risen, that Jesus lives. Easter Sunday is not about celebrating Jesus' crucifixion – it's about celebrating Jesus' resurrection. Our focus today is not death, it's life. Resurrection Sunday is not about mourning it's about celebrating.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the central fact of Christian history – the church is built on this. If Jesus had not rose from the dead, there would be no Christian Church.

Our God is the God of the possible and the impossible. Think how the disciples and other followers were feeling on the first Easter morning 2000 years ago. They had given everything to Jesus, their past, their present, even their future and all seemed good until three days ago. When Jesus died, it seemed like all their hopes and everything they believed in had died also.

They had seen the impossible, they had seen blind men see, they had seen lame men walk and they had seen dead men live. They had believed with all their hearts, but not anymore, now their beliefs were as dead as their master. There was nothing left to do but go home, to leave Jerusalem, to leave their hopes, to leave their dreams and just go home.

They had seen Jesus beaten, they had seen Him crucified, they had seen Him killed, they had seen Him buried – they thought the dream was as dead as the dreamer.

Unless, unless it was true what Mary had seen, she had seen an empty tomb, empty grave clothes and she had seen Jesus. If that was true....then He wasn't dead. He was alive. If He was alive then everything was going to be alright.

Why is the resurrection so important?

Because Jesus was raised from the dead:

Slide 1 We know that the Kingdom of Heaven has broken into earth's history. Our world is now headed for redemption, not disaster. God's mighty power is at work destroying sin, creating new lives and preparing us for Jesus' second coming.

Slide 2 We know that death has been conquered and we too, will be raised from the dead to live forever with Christ.

Slide 3 The churches witness in the world now have authority. The apostles most important message in the book of Acts, was the proclamation that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Slide 4 The meaning of the sacrament of the Lord's supper is known. Like Jesus' followers on the Emmaus Road, sharing with Jesus, we break bread with our risen Lord, who comes in power to save us

Slide 5 We now can find meaning even in great tragedy. No matter what happens to us as we walk with the Lord, the resurrection gives us hope for the future.

Slide 6 The resurrection assures us that Christ is alive and ruling His kingdom. He is not a legend; He is alive and real.

Slide 7 We now have, available to us, God's power that brought Jesus back from the dead, so that we can live for Him in an evil world.

How can we share the message of Jesus' resurrection to those who may be hearing it for the first time?

At first they may say – it is just a fairy tale, it is impossible to believe. They may check out the facts but still be puzzled about what happened.

But we must not give up. Because once they encounter Jesus personally, they will come to accept the fact of the resurrection.

And we should celebrate when they commit themselves to Jesus and devote their lives to serve Him, because they have finally understood the reality of Jesus' presence with them.

Do you believe in the resurrection? Do you take bits and pieces of the Bible, believe some of it but not the rest?

Augustine said, "If you believe what you like in the gospels, and reject what you don't like, it is not the gospel you believe, but yourself."

If you don't believe that Christ rose from the dead, why are you here this morning? The resurrection reveals that Jesus was not just a good man, He was not just a prophet or a teacher. He was and still is God.

Have you been made right with God? Are you leading a new life?

That's why Jesus was raised from the dead, so that we can be forgiven, so that we can believe and so that we can have a new life. And all we need to do is reach out and accept it.

Jesus overcame the grave, He's still alive and available for all to personally encounter. It's Easter Sunday, the Tomb is Empty.

HE IS RISEN!!

REFLECTION.

Take a moment to settle yourself into prayer. Shut out any distractions and concentrate instead on your breathing. Take slow, deep breaths – as you do so, gently bring your attention onto God. Focus your mind on His nature as the Resurrector. Jesus is the King who brings the dead to life. There is nothing He cannot do. (pause)

Consider areas of your life which you consider to be dead or dying. Perhaps you are feeling spiritually dry; perhaps your self-confidence is struggling; perhaps you are lacking in purpose. In this space, ask God for help. Receive His resurrection life. Jesus is everything you need today. (pause)

Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, there is always hope; nothing is too far gone.

Do you need Christ's hope today - open your heart and mind and welcome Him in.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank You for Your unstoppable resurrection life. When I was dead in my sins, You raised me up. I have been saved, forgiven, and set free. Give me the grace to live from that reality today. Help me to remember that the same power that conquered the grave, lives in me. Set my heart to do Your will. In Jesus' name Amen.