

May the words of my mouth, and the thoughts of all our hearts be always acceptable to you our God.

Easter Sunday St Martin's John 20 v 1-10

Jesus Christ has risen today, alleluia.

Well, what a week this has been, hasn't it.

Last Sunday we were all waving our Palm crosses shouting, Halleluiah! and throwing our coats on the ground as Jesus entered Jerusalem. Praising and worshipping Him.

Then there's great change, we go to the table at the last supper where he was betrayed. Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, betrayed Jesus, Son of God, he sold his soul for a few pieces of silver. Did the disciples not understand what was happening, had they not heard all that Jesus had explained. Peter later denies knowing Jesus, and the cock crows. The crowds then turn against Jesus and He is put before Pilot, condemned to death and crucified.

Friday when He died, did you walk the road to Calvary with Him?

So we come to today, what a roller coaster of a ride it has been.

Where you there this morning with Mary when she went to the tomb with some of the others, how must they have felt. The stone wasn't there, and where were the Roman centurions who had been on guard. How could all this have happened? Why did it happen?

But it had to. If Jesus hadn't died and rose again, we would all still be full of sin, without the chance of salvation.

The tomb in which Jesus Christ the founder of the Christian faith was buried is located in Jerusalem - but his tomb is empty. Why, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, Hallelujah. The resurrection of Jesus is so important to our faith that without it there would be no Christianity. Without the resurrection the Christian church would never have begun. The Apostle Paul explains just how important it is when he wrote: in (1Corinthians15:17) **"...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."**

We know from the other Gospels that Mary was just one of a group of the women who went to the tomb that morning. It was still dark when they set out but by the time they reached the tomb it must have been beginning to get light. They went out of love and devotion. When they arrived Mary got a shock. She ...saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

The women may possibly have been relieved, that after all they would be able to enter the tomb to lay their spices but, as they looked in through the entrance they got an even bigger shock. They saw that the body of Jesus was no longer there. Fear and anguish must have gripped their hearts and minds. Mary Magdalene's immediate reaction was to run back to the city and tell the disciples. So we read in v.2, "...she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him!'" Mary knew the tomb was empty and naturally she thought someone must have taken His body somewhere. But who had taken it and where had they taken it? Was this just a cruel trick, another twist of the knife, chaos upon chaos. To her it didn't make sense.

The stone had been rolled away from the entrance not so that Jesus could get out, he could have done that without moving it. but that others could get in and see that he was gone. They needed to see that the tomb was empty.

So why did Jesus Rise, What is the Significance of the Resurrection, and why was it important.

The Resurrection confirms that Jesus is who He claimed to be.

The Resurrection proved that Christ was divine. Jesus proved His divinity by fulfilling the prophecies of His death and by His return from the grave. The Bible says in (Romans 1:4) that He, Jesus "was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,."

The Resurrection proved Christ's power to forgive sin. The Bible says, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). By rising from the dead, Jesus proved His authority and power to break the bonds of sin and to assure forgiveness and eternal life to all who accept His gift of salvation.

The Resurrection revealed Christ's power over death. The Bible says, "We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Romans 6:9,). The Resurrection secured our victory over our death as well. (Ephesians 2:6). "and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,".

The Resurrection defeated God's enemy. From the moment of his original rebellion until the day of the Cross, the devil fought viciously and cunningly to overthrow the kingdom of God. He must have thought he had dealt the final and decisive blow in this age-old war. But this was the his most serious miscalculation. The Cross was heaven's triumph. And when Jesus rose, the

power of sin and death was forever shattered. Because of the Resurrection, Christians need never fear Satan or death again.

Christ came back from the dead to empower us to live as He lived. Jesus didn't die and then rise again just to be studied and oohed and aahed over. He died and rose to offer through His blood and His life, power to live an abundant, successful, fulfilling life.

Jesus Christ is our Mediator, the connection, the bridge, between God and us.

Jesus Christ is God's solution to the problem of human imperfection and evil. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, we don't have to be separated from God any longer. Jesus paid the price for our sin and in so doing, bridged the gap between us and God. We were on one side and God on the other, between us was a great chasm of our sin. Jesus' death and resurrection is our bridge across that chasm to God.

Instead of trying harder to reach God, we simply need to accept Jesus and his sacrifice as the one way to God. (John 14:6). Jesus says "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one can come to the Father except through me". He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26).

If you have not asked Jesus into your life, why not do so today, the day He rose. There are some booklets at the back of church, or speak to Gary, Dorothy or one of the ministry team over coffee. If you have made that commitment then why not reaffirm that through prayer or anointing. There will be prayer ministry and anointing with oil during Communion.. Commit or reaffirm your life to Jesus. Don't let this moment pass.

Let us pray.

Loving Jesus as you told us, you are the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through you. Today, let us commit or reaffirm our lives to you so that we also may have a relationship with your Father.

Amen

