



Easter Sunday 2021

Text: 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!'

I am sure that we can all remember a time when we have put something or watching someone putting something somewhere. When we go to find it a day or so later, we cannot find it – it has gone. In very simplistic terms this is what has happened to the physical body of Jesus. Following his crucifixion and death on the cross on Friday, his body was placed in a borrowed tomb and a large stone rolled in front of the entrance. Mary had been one of the people to witness this, so she knew where his body was laying. Yet when the two Mary's go to the tomb less than 48 hours later, the body of Jesus has gone. Let's remind ourselves of how Mark records this very special time.

Read Mark Chapter 16 verses 1 – 8

On this first Easter Sunday morning, the first day of the working week for the Jews, the ladies are desperate to get to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid, to complete the rituals associated with burial at that time. I imagine that to them, the fact that Jesus had laid in the tomb for over 24 hours without being properly cared for was weighing heavily on their minds. They may well have been worrying about what people around them would be thinking of them, not fulfilling their duties according to the custom.

Very early in the morning Mary, James and Salome' mother and Mary Magdalene went out to complete the burial rituals for Jesus. They brought some spices and made their way to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid. As they are making their way to the tomb, they suddenly realise that there is a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and a guard their as well. How are they going to move the stone to get in the tomb? They were discussing this as they made their way hurriedly to Jesus, as well as probably making sure they had everything they needed.

As they arrive at the tomb, a cave in the hillside, they see that the stone has already been rolled away, the guards has gone. I imagine the two ladies standing there, wondering what has happened, has someone stolen the body, after overcoming the guards. They must have been very confused, but they press on with what they needed to do, to perfume Jesus' body. So they enter the tomb and instead of seeing Jesus's body wrapped in the burial shroud, as they had seen Jesus wrapped in as he was placed in the tomb, they see a young man dressed in a white robe. Now the ladies are even more confused, the man then speaks, tells them not to be afraid, as Jesus who was crucified, has risen from the dead, he is not here. Now go and tell this disciples and Peter. Notice here in verse 7 that Peter is singled out for a special mention, probably because he spoke out and said he would not let Jesus down, but he did in the courtyard of the temple, as he denied knowing Jesus and being one of his followers (Mark 14 v 66-72).

The person in white was as we know with hindsight was an angel sent from God. Notice also that the angel say that Jesus will meet with them in Galilee soon. This is referring to the resurrection appearances that will look at after Easter. Mark then tells us that the two Mary's leave the tomb, trembling and do not say anything to anyone as they are afraid.

The rest of the chapter is not included in the earliest versions of the bible, but it goes on to say how Jesus appeared to the disciples and others before his ascension into Heaven.



The other Gospels have slightly different accounts of what happened at the tomb, but all of the Gospels record the fact that the women, went to the tomb to complete the burial rituals according to the Jewish custom. They all agree that Jesus' body was no longer there and that the shroud that he had been wrapped in was laid on the stone where Jesus had been. Most of the Gospels have the fact that where Jesus should have been there was an angel, a person dressed in white. This person/angel tells the people, Jesus has risen.

This is one of the most important statements from an angel in the bible, in my opinion, 'He has risen', this is what Jesus had been trying to tell the disciples during his time with them, that they must learn from him and one day they would see him hung on a cross and die, but 3 days later he would rise again to overcome the power of death.

This is the glorious message of hope at Easter; this is the glorious message of hope for all our lives. God raised his one and only son from the dead and seated him at his right hand in glory. Why? Because God loves each one of us.

Remember the well know verses from John's Gospel – 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save it through him. (John 3 v 16 & 17)

This is what God has done for each one of us, given us new life through the death and resurrection of his Son.

May each one of us today, rejoice in the knowledge that God raised his Son from the dead for us. May each one of us, share the joy of Easter with those around us in whatever way we can.

AMEN



CHRIST THE **LORD**
IS RISEN TODAY!