

All Saints' Church Thornton Hough



A service for Easter Day

Sunday 4th April 2021

Online

The Greeting

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

Alleluia.

He has defeated the powers of death.

Alleluia.

Jesus turns our sorrow into dancing.

Alleluia.

He has the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

Hymn: Jesus Christ is risen today *(sung by St Martin's Voices)*

- 1 Jesus Christ is risen today, *Alleluia.*
our triumphant holy day, *Alleluia.*
who did once, upon the cross, *Alleluia.*
suffer to redeem our loss. *Alleluia.*
- 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, *Alleluia.*
Christ, our heavenly King, *Alleluia.*
who endured the Cross and grave, *Alleluia.*
sinners to redeem and save. *Alleluia.*
- 3 But the pains that he endured, *Alleluia.*
our salvation have procured; *Alleluia.*
now above the sky he's King, *Alleluia.*
where the angels ever sing. *Alleluia.*

*Anonymous Latin, Lyra Davidica (1708), Compleat Psalmodist (1749 Arnold),
Charles Wesley (1707-88)*

Mark 16: 1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, 'Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?'

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

'Don't be alarmed,' he said. 'You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But

go, tell his disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Reflection: Mind the Gap

If you’ve ever travelled on the London Underground you will have heard this disembodied message repeated at station stops: “Mind the gap.” For many foreign visitors, this expression is very hard to understand. What does it mean to “mind” something? “Mind the gap.” Why is a gap dangerous? Between what and what does this gap appear? How big is it? Some station announcements now extend the instruction so that listeners are told to “Mind the gap between the train and the platform”, at least clearing up one potential piece of confusion.

The final chapter of Mark’s Gospel could probably benefit from a “Mind the gap” kind of warning, too. Stand clear of the resurrection, please.

There is something disturbing, almost defeated about the final verse:

“Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.”

The very earliest authorities bring Mark’s Gospel to a conclusion at this point: no account of whether the women did actually meet Peter and tell him what they witnessed, no glorious testimony to Jesus coming to speak to the apostles, his instruction to proclaim the good news to all creation, their obedience to this command.

Rather, there is a sense of paralysis. They “fled” – a twitchy, animal reaction to a threat or horrific event. And, once away from this awful, awe-ful scene they are silent, too afraid to say anything to anyone. Who would believe a group of women anyway? Their testimony wasn’t permissible in a court of law. They were distraught, hallucinating, perhaps. Our reading concludes with silence.

Some commentators have suggested that the ‘proper’ ending of Mark’s gospel has been lost, the end of a scroll got torn off or some mice with little regard for the Good News written there chewed it up, or damp attacked it. Any of those explanations might be true, but whatever really happened is immaterial.

“Mind the gap”:

If the women had indeed kept silent, how come we are sitting here this morning?

This Easter message of resurrection will not keep silent. You may recall the verse in Luke's Gospel, when the Pharisees ask Jesus to make his disciples stop speaking. Jesus replies, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." The stone has been rolled away. Nothing can keep the good news in; not even our own embarrassment and inarticulacy.

Mind the gap. The silence has been replaced with a chorus of voices from every nation who have heard that Jesus Christ has risen. They matter. You matter. I matter: because Jesus not only died but rose again because he loves us that much. The gap is beginning to fill.

But there is still a gap.

Where are we in the silences? If, as I've suggested, the writer of Mark's gospel didn't simply lose the last part of his scroll by some accident, but rather in some God-incident, what is there for each of us to take away and learn today? What are we sharing? What is the good news which we have?

Mind the gap. In the women's silence, and the ragged, jagged edges of that last verse of Mark's gospel, where "they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid" we are invited to explore and inhabit that silent gap. More than simply head-knowledge, what do we know in our hearts, minds, our personal and corporate experience and imaginations about the risen Lord Jesus? What is our response to it?

"Mind the gap". I pray that as we celebrate Jesus' glorious resurrection, we will also work to be the people building bridges over the gap, living out afresh the power of the resurrection in our families, our Church, our communities today and every day.

He is risen.

He is risen indeed.

Alleluia.

This joyful Eastertide (*sung by St Martin's Voices*)

This joyful Eastertide,
away with sin and sorrow.
My Love, the Crucified,
has sprung to life this morrow:
*Had Christ, that once was slain,
Ne'er burst his three-day prison,
Our faith had been in vain:*

*But now hath Christ arisen,
Arisen, arisen, arisen!*

My flesh in hope shall rest,
and for a season slumber:
till trump from east to west:
shall wake the dead in number:

Chorus

Death's flood hath lost its chill,
since Jesus crossed the river:
lover of souls, from ill
my passing soul deliver:

Chorus

George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934)

The Lord's Prayer

We say The Lord's Prayer together:

***Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.***

Hymn: Thine be the glory *(sung by St Martin's Voices)*

1 Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son;
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son:
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

2 Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son:
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

3 No more we doubt thee, glorious prince of life!
Life is nought without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son:
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*

Edmund L Budry (1854-1932), translated by Richard B Hoyle (1875-1939)

Final prayers and blessing

God the Father,
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

Amen.

God the Son,
who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

Amen.

God the Holy Spirit,
whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst you and remain with you always.

Let us bless the Lord:

thanks be to God.

***Blessing, honour and glory be yours,
here and everywhere,
now and for ever.***

Alleluia!

Amen.

The hymns used in this service are sung by St Martin's Voices. These have been produced by the Church of England, working with St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Royal School of Church Music.

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