

Easter Sunday Message

Sunday 11th April

Song: Thine be the glory

Scripture reading – The Easter Story

Matthew Chapters 27 – 28

1 Corinthians 15

Good Morning - Happy Easter everybody!

THE LORD HAS RISEN – HE HAS RISEN INDEED

Did you watch the sunrise today? Have you eaten all your Easter eggs already?
Hot Cross buns?

This Easter is certainly different to any others that I've experienced.

I wonder when you think back what memories you have of the past. March of witness, sunrise services, Easter egg hunt and probably so many other experiences.

I'm hoping that this Easter although different will hopefully be a one off. We are facing a really difficult and dangerous time. We really are living in the shadow of death. Thousands have sadly died this week and all of us live with the uncertainty, with the fear that maybe we could have the virus. Our current Prime Minister has been fighting for his life and I've heard it said on numerous occasions that the virus is indiscriminate. Rich or poor, young and old anyone can get it !

I want to start by saying, that there is something else that is indiscriminate and that's God's love.

I'm sure we all know that verse from **John 3:16** For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son (Jesus). God loves you and me, he loves everybody and

doesn't want people to perish (**2 Peter 3:9**). When we follow Jesus nothing can separate us from the love of God (**Romans 8: 31-39**) "Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God's love is indiscriminate and it is his love that sent Jesus to us 2000 years ago.

Apart from Coronavirus there is another virus that the Bible talks about and it's one that we all have and that is **SIN**. We all have it and it separates us from God! It destroys relationships.

Watch the news and you will see the best and the worst in people during these tough times. It's Horrible seeing such selfishness! People storing up food and items that they will never get to use, People refusing to stop meeting others as we're being urged to self isolate. It is because we are selfish, we are sinners and we miss the mark with God. What about us ? Maybe we've been guilty in being a little selfish through this difficult time. Maybe we have become judgemental and look at others with contempt. What have you done, thought and said that may displease God ?

It is because we are lost that Jesus came (it's why we celebrate Christmas). Jesus came with a mission to save us and restore that relationship with him and so we come to the Easter Story !

We probably know the Easter Story really well, back to front and some of us maybe word for word. I want to talk about the resurrection because this is crucial to our faith. Without the Resurrection of Christ our faith is useless.

Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15:12-20**

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead

are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Without the resurrection our faith is useless !

- Because of Jesus we have a future ! Jesus said “I am the resurrection and the life” (**John 11:25**) to Martha and guess what, he backed up that claim and brought his friend Lazarus back to life! It’s probably the verse I’ve heard the most at funerals. For many in this world death is the end they don’t believe or have any certainty about what is next. If I believed this I think my world would be falling apart right now. The curtain closes and it’s goodbye but for those who believe on the name of Jesus will be saved. This is not it ! This is far from it. We have a future where we will live with God. We don’t become nothing, snuffed out. We carry on but without the diseases, the ageing, the tiredness. There will be no more death, no more tears and we shall say

1 Corinthians 15:55

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?

Ewelina & I lost a good friend recently from Lincoln Baptist. Naomi was a wonderful Sister in Christ and helped us with moving here to Peterborough. She sadly passed away from cancer and yes, I was sad but I look forward when I pass into glory to saying hello to her again. I’m sure you can think of someone who loved Jesus who has passed on to glory. We will see them again if we are part of God’s family. Because of Jesus, we have victory and you can read more

in **1 Corinthians 15**.

- Because of Jesus we are forgiven – **Ephesians 1:7**

With a loud voice Jesus cried “It is finished”. Jesus completed his mission and the temple curtain that separated man from God was torn in two. It meant that we have access to God through the blood of Jesus Christ and not through the blood of a perfect spotless lamb. Jesus became our great high priest and therefore we can boldly approach the throne of God.

Hebrews 4: 14-16

[14](#)Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we profess. [15](#)For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet was without sin. [16](#)Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Caste your mind back to the story of Esther she had to boldly approach the King and could have been killed for it. We can boldly approach the Living God with confidence, we won't be killed for it. Think about that as we come to God! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer.

- My last point for us to think about is this:

If Jesus is alive and we believe this, do we live and act like our Saviour has been resurrected or do some of us act like he's still in the grave. Close your eyes and imagine you were at the tomb that first Easter. How would you react if somebody you loved and cared about that had died stood there in front of you alive and well? We would want to tell everybody, the hairs on the back of neck would be standing up. Let us go forth in faith and excitement that our Lord Jesus Christ is Alive!

What an exciting message we have to share with the world !

Happy Easter !

PRAYER

Living Jesus be our hope
Through the darkness help us cope
The path is steep, a narrow way
We face our fears, with you we stay.
Hold our hand and pull us close
Your love is what we need the most
We hold your promise to the end
Just the beginning with you Lord
Our friend.

Amen