

LUKE 24:1-43  
EASTER MORNING

5 stones show how it was on Sunday morning! Also have a child see what is inside an empty Easter Egg!

**Betrayed** – people wanted Jesus out of the way, Judas had betrayed Him for 30 silver coins, he had told the soldiers where to find Jesus; the other disciples ran away!

**Arrested** – the soldiers had taken Jesus away; the disciples ran away because they were frightened that they might be arrested too; they couldn't believe what was happening to their friend because they all still believed that He was God's Messiah.

**Crucified** – maybe they still thought that the soldiers would let Jesus go, but no! Instead they killed Him on the cross; people told lies about Him, they made up charges against Him; He had done nothing wrong but still He was killed on a cross.

**Buried** – late on the Friday, Joseph from a place called Arimathea, and who had become a friend of Jesus in secret, now came and took His body down from the cross and put it in a cave in the garden, this was Jesus' tomb and the Romans put a huge stone across the mouth of the tomb and put a guard on it, just in case...

**Hopeless** – it was Sunday morning, some of the women went to the garden; they wanted to persuade the soldiers to open the cave so that they could put perfumes and oils on Jesus' body; they had loved and followed Jesus and now they wanted to do the best for Him since He died. They felt hopeless because of all that had gone before.

**Read: Luke 24:1-12**

Sunday morning –when they got there, the stone was already moved and this is what they discovered – (What's inside the egg? Nothing!) His body was not there any more; this was the last thing they expected to find; the angel told them that Jesus is not here, He is (turn stones over to show word) – RISEN! Jesus is alive, risen from dead. Everything is changed – life was not hopeless any more, but full of hope; Jesus was alive and is still alive, He lives for ever and gives us all kinds of good things – He brings us peace when we're frightened, hope when we're lost, forgiveness when we've made mistakes, and helps us to find God and all because He is alive. When everything seemed hopeless, the women discovered the risen Jesus; when all seems hopeless for us, remember that Jesus is alive, and we can find risen Jesus for our hearts.

**AN AFTERNOON STROLL**

Imagine a walk along the Water of Leith for an afternoon stroll; you've taken the dog, it is an ideal, calm, and peaceful place, and all your worries are forgotten; you smile at the people you meet and think the world is a wonderful place. You meet other people who are enjoying the same and stop to pass the time of day with them.

The Road to Emmaus is not an afternoon stroll like that. **Read: Luke 24:13-27**

We find 2 people who are:

**disappointed** – it has all gone wrong!

**frustrated** – ‘we had hoped...’

**sad** – they are convinced that their Special friend has died and they mourn

**confused** – things have happened that they don’t understand!

**bewildered** – the women have told us things, but we don’t know what to believe any more

**lost** – we not know what to do next

Then Jesus comes along; they don’t know Him for some reason, but He walks alongside them and explains to them what the Bible said about Himself. Then He made to stop and stay the night and as He broke bread they recognised Him; was it something to do with the light in the house, or did His hood come off, or did they see the marks in His wrists where the nails had been? They knew it was Jesus and their life was changed forever.

They ran back to Jerusalem, all 7 miles. “We have seen Lord! He’s alive.” Joy took place of all these other things. They rejoiced that Jesus is alive.

SUNDAY EVENING IN JERUSALEM!

***This is your life!*** This was a programme on television when the presenter had a big red book and found someone, usually a famous person, celebrity or someone who had done something famous, and surprised them and took them back to the studio and told their life story; their friends would all be hidden backstage and brought out one at a time to tell funny stories about the person whose life is being told. All these people then sat on seats on the stage and we imagine they had a party afterwards. Often the programme ended with someone special appearing: ‘all the way from Australia, you’ve not seen her for 35 years, here’s your granny!’ and there would be lots of hugs and tears and surprises and people would not know what to say.

It’s Sunday evening in Jerusalem; there are no television cameras around because they’re not invented yet! There is no party going on because the people we’re thinking about weren’t sure yet whether they should be happy. But what we can see is that one by one there are people coming into the room with a story to tell. The women who had been at the tomb, came back and told their story – there was no body there; the angel who told us.... Mary came back to tell them that she saw someone she thought was the gardener, and He spoke to her and it was Jesus! She’s sure it was! Peter and John perhaps, are coming back into the room, telling others that they had visited the tomb and it was as the women said, but they didn’t see Jesus. Then two people come bursting in, having run all the way back to Jerusalem from Emmaus, they’ve run seven miles and are all out of breath and they have a story to tell – ‘we’ve seen Jesus; He walked with us and we only recognised Him when He broke bread at our table’.

Then, last of all, “*while they...*” (24:36) What then? They are frightened first of all, they thought they were seeing a ghost and they didn’t like ghosts; so they were afraid, startled. Perhaps they all huddled together in the corner of the room, trying to hide from the ghost, trying to protect one another. Then Jesus said “*look at...*” (24:39) You can’t touch a ghost! Ghosts don’t eat fish, but Jesus did. Then their attitude began to change: “*While they...*” (24:41a) Joy and amazement – I was in the Primary School this wk, leading an assembly on the Easter story and some children had written diaries of Easter week, telling the stories and their reactions had they been there. One girl had written that, on Easter Sunday, she would have felt, “Excited, surprised and a bit confused!” Spot on! Joy and amazement – because they still didn’t really understand what was going on.

But here, standing amongst these excited, surprised, confused disciples is Jesus Himself, their Saviour, their Lord. Jesus is alive and now they see Him for themselves and they know that He lives. Not only do they know, but He brings words of peace “*Peace be with you!*” (23:36) All their fears, worries, disappointments, frustrations – Jesus says “Peace be with you!” What a difference, a change, a transformation for disciples.

This is what makes Easter good for us: Jesus who was dead is alive again: we who have sinned against God find forgiveness; we who have fears and worries find a Saviour who promises to be with us and bring us grace every day to help us; we who have disappointments and frustrations are promised hope and peace in the midst of life; we who have difficult things in life to deal with are promised a God who never leaves us, who is with us not only here and now in Church, but wherever we go tomorrow, whatever our circumstances. God is with us and the power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us to save us completely and to help us live life well day by day.

**Prayer:**

Risen Lord Jesus

Roll away stone of our doubts; let us trust you

Roll away stone of our reserve; let us proclaim you.

Roll away stone of our heaviness of heart; let us rejoice in you.

Roll away stone of our fear; let us find hope in you,

Now and through all eternity. Amen