

Sunday Update
4th April 2021

John 20:11-18

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?' 'They have taken my Lord away,' she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' 14 At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?' Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.' 16 Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means 'Teacher'). 17 Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her.

There is a story about Ernest Hemingway, that for a bet he was challenged to write a complete story in 6 words, and this is the result: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." You can use your imagination to make that story come alive. Whether the story about Hemingway and the bet is true or whether it is an urban myth doesn't really matter. His 6-word story is there for us to read and use our imagination to figure it out. "*He is not here; He has risen!*" is a 7-word story at the heart of Easter. These were the words of the angel to the women on the Sunday morning when they went to Jesus' tomb. His body had been laid there on the Friday evening; nothing was allowed on the Sabbath, so the Sunday morning was the first opportunity they had to go to tend Jesus' dead body. When they got there, the stone was rolled away and the tomb empty. The angels told them the story: "*He is not here; He has risen!*" What did they make of that story? Seven words that changed the world forever; seven words that change our world once we get a chance to work out what they mean.

John doesn't tell us these words in his version of the Easter Sunday story, but he does tell us that the women went to the tomb and what they saw left them with questions. They went to get Peter and the other disciple (probably John himself) who in turn ran to see. They saw the empty tomb; they saw the graveclothes lying in a neat heap and John tells us "*he saw and believed.*" (verse 8) John doesn't say what he believed: maybe he means that he now believed what the women had said; maybe he believed the resurrection; whatever that means, there are still a lot of questions. Mary stays behind after Peter and John had gone home. It is the half-light of morning; her eyes are full of tears; she is probably looking at the ground in her grief. She wanted to be near to Jesus, even if it were only His dead body, but now it is gone and she is lost. She is aware of someone else in the garden, but she can't bring herself to lift her head and look round. She assumes that he is the gardener. '*Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.*' (verse 15)

One word is all it takes. "*Mary!*" "One word which remade her world and transformed her life ever after, and the word was her own name!" (Bruce Milne) Was it the fact that this "stranger" knew her name? Was it the way in which he said her name? For whatever reason, Mary looked round and looked into the face of Jesus. She had come to the garden because she wanted to be near to Jesus' body, but here she is face-to-face with Jesus and He is alive. Her whole attitude is changed in an instant. Tears are gone; despair is replaced by joy; she wants to give Jesus a hug; at the end of the story, she rushes off to tell the others "*I have seen the Lord*" (verse 18) Her world is changed by just one word, her own name, spoken to her by the Lord Jesus.

“He is not here; He has risen!” This seven-word story is probably the most-debated and discussed story in the whole of Jesus’ life. People have come up with all kinds of other explanations for what might have happened as they try to argue that the resurrection could not possibly have happened; some suggest that the soldiers stole the body (but then couldn’t produce it later!), or that the disciples stole the body (but why would they give up their lives for a lie!). Some suggest that Jesus simply fainted and revived in the cool of the tomb (but the evidence speaks of Him being really dead!). Nothing stands up; the only explanation that works is the Bible story of resurrection. The tomb is empty; Jesus is raised; He is alive for ever.

Easter is a great story. It also has some great results for us. First of all, Easter and resurrection is the guarantee that Jesus is the Saviour. “He died that we might be forgiven” says the Good Friday hymn; the resurrection is the guarantee that this is true. On its own, His death makes Him a martyr to a good cause, but resurrection turns Jesus into the Saviour of the world, the One who is able to save us completely. Easter also allows us to look at the world in a different way. On Easter morning, the world was a very bleak place as far as Mary was concerned; everything had fallen apart; the resurrection changed that completely, letting her see that the living Lord was with her. The risen Jesus is with us always and everywhere through His Spirit; the power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us to help us live our lives; the world that looks bleak for us can find hope when we remember that Jesus lives. Finally, Easter helps us to look at death with a steady eye. The Christian hope is that because Jesus has defeated death, He will share that victory with us; we shall live and share His glory.

One word began all of this. *“Mary!”* When Jesus spoke her name, Mary looked for the first time and saw something amazing, something fantastic, something profound. Jesus is alive. She watched Him die on the cross on Friday, her heart full of grief; she arrived at the tomb on Sunday morning looking to be near to His body and treat it with oils and spices, her heart still full of grief; she left the garden full of joy, bursting to tell others *“I have seen the Lord!”* Our Easter cards this year, carry the words *“Hope and Love”* – these are the qualities we want to find this Easter. The world has been a bleak place for the last year, full of Covid and lockdown, full of fear and anxiety. Many of us have felt forgotten in all of this, alone, lonely, anonymous. Jesus knows your name; He knows your deepest feelings; He knows what you need. Hope and love are His gifts to you this Easter; open your eyes and your hearts to see and know hope and love from Jesus. Share this hope and love with someone else today.

Prayer: Father, we thank you for Easter, for the joy of Easter morning, for the joy of the Easter hymns, for the story that tells of resurrection; for Mary’s changed life. Lord, there are many things we still don’t understand, there are questions in our minds, but we thank You that You know us and we pray that You will fill our hearts with hope and love today and that You will change our lives and our world this Easter.

*Day by day, dear Lord of you
Three things I pray:
To see you more clearly,
To love you more dearly,
To follow you more nearly,
Day by day.*

Please take time during the week to pray for the people referred to in these topics:

- For people who need to know hope in their hearts, who are in despair, or lost in their grief, or whose anxieties and fears dominate their lives.
- For people who need to know that they are loved, that they are not alone and anonymous, but are known and loved by the Lord Jesus who knows each one of us by name and loves us enough to die for us.
- For the church telling the story of Easter today, to do so with joy and in the power of the Spirit, so that many might hear and believe that Jesus is raised from the dead and is able to save.
- For people who have contracted Covid and are in hospital, that they make a good recovery; those NHS staff who are caring for them, under pressure by the numbers of people in hospital and trying to manage the care they provide.
- For people who mourn because a loved one has died; help them to find comfort and peace; for the process of grief that goes on and those who feel the effects of lockdown on their deepest emotions and feelings of loss.
- For the roll-out of the vaccine to be efficient and effective, reaching the people who need it most; for those waiting for the letter; for the vaccine to make people safe, as promised.
- For the opening-up of things after lockdown; some businesses opening on April 5th; all children going back to school full-time after the holidays; other restrictions being lifted later this month; continue to pray for safety and for good health for the population, that there will be no more spikes in the virus and that people will behave responsibly.
- For people who are still isolating, still spending time on their own again and feeling afraid; for people in care homes, beginning to meet family again, and the staff who care for them.
- For schools: pupils and teachers on holiday for the next two weeks, but then going back full-time; for pupils to settle back down to a routine and to stay safe; for teachers who are trying to manage classes as well as teach and catch up with lost work.
- For communities and businesses: the pubs and hotels and others preparing to open again; for those who own these businesses and it is their livelihood; for those who work and are still on furlough; for the gaps left in the social interaction of many people, adding to their sense of isolation.
- For Churches, some buildings open and some still closed; help them to care for all of their people; may the technology be a lifeline for lots of people; help churches across Scotland to be a light in their community and share the light of Jesus with others.
- For people we know...
- This week, take time to think about these words and pray them into your own heart: *“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins... but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Corinthians 15:17,20)*

Here are some links to hymns you might know and love.

See what a morning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xM-fpXayUg>

Jesus Christ is risen today

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6sj9ljVsfk

Low in the grave (Christ arose!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oN77HjfAc8k>

Thine be the glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmJgbpJQHUY>

Because He lives

[Because He Lives w/Lyrics - YouTube](#)

Remember the prayer e-mail line at prayerjgpc@gmail.com

Some other resources:

- Each Sunday at 10.30am, we will have a short time together using Zoom; a link has been sent out in the e-mail with this update which should enable you to join in.
- This reflection is available on our own church website under the “sermons” tab and there is an archive of sermon material there for you to read and links to the video reflections – www.jgpc.org.uk

- If you have a smartphone, a tablet or an i-pad, the Bible2020 app will give you a short bible reading each day (from the Scottish Bible Society)
- Scripture Union daily bible readings can be found at <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive>
- The Church of Scotland website has prayers and reflections from the Moderator and details of lots of on-line streamed church services - <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>
- Claremont Church in East Kilbride are making services available over a phone line: here are the contact details which you can share with people who are not on line: **Sunday Services @ 10:30 - same details every week** 020 3937 2973; PIN: 352 598 857#

DAILY BIBLE STUDY MATERIALS - New issues of **"Word For Today"** and **"Word For You Today"** Booklets for February, March and April are now available. Please contact Michael Merriman who will be delighted to arrange copies. Other Bible Study materials are also available with Ian Aitken. **Let the Bible feed you.**

Try Praying: Try Praying is designed to help people who have never prayed before get started. The booklet is a 7-day guide to help people get started on the journey of faith. Over the past year, 100 of these booklets have been taken from the box outside our Church building. Over Easter, we are asking people to consider giving some money to support **Try Praying**; if you would like to contribute, either give to the church bank account online (Sort Code 83-19-15; Account 00184681) with "Trypraying" in the reference box, or give cash to Douglas Buchanan or the minister.

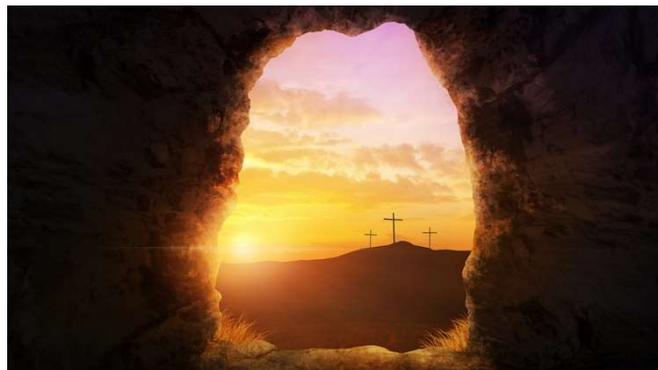
Easter Sunday

These resources are designed to help you explore the Bible as a family together at home while we can't go to church. Be as creative as you want to be and enjoy spending time with each other and with God.

Prepare yourself...

Dear God,
Thank you for the story of Easter and the empty tomb. Thank you that your plan did not end with death on the cross but with your resurrection and new life. Thank you that you made a way for us to be forgiven of all our mistakes and to be your friends forever.

Amen.



Challenge...

Mystery objects

Blindfold a volunteer then put an object in their hands and ask them to describe it. Can they guess what it is?

Question...



What things make you happy or sad?

Think about the last week and make a tally of the happy and sad things. Which has the most?



Read the Bible...

Today's verses are found in John 20:1-18. You can read them in a Bible or find them [here](#).

You could try reading the verses in different versions to see if it adds to your understanding of the passage. Think about all the different feelings there would have been in the story, can you draw an emoji for each one? This is another animation from Saddleback Kids that tells the whole of the Easter story: [The Story of Easter: Jesus' sacrifice](#)



Talk together...

Our lives are a mixture of sad and happy things, both are important. We can't escape the sad things in life, and sometimes we only get to happy things by going through the difficulties. Today's story has both sadness and happiness in it.

- Can you think of a time when something bad ended up good?
- How do you think Jesus' followers were feeling on Sunday morning, before they heard the news of what had happened?
- What would you do if you saw an angel?
- Have you ever experienced meeting someone but not recognising who they were straight away?
- When did Mary realise she was with Jesus? How do you think Mary felt when she realised she was talking to the risen Jesus?
- What surprises you most about the Easter story?
- How would you describe the importance of the Easter story to someone?

Play together...

Whose voice?

Mary didn't recognise Jesus until he spoke and said her name.

Have someone close their eyes. Members of your family should say your name but try to disguise their voice. Can the person with their eyes closed guess who is speaking?



Make something...

Resurrection rolls. You'll need: croissant dough (can be bought premade in supermarkets), marshmallows, cinnamon, sugar, butter. Mix 3 tbsp sugar and 1tsp cinnamon together in a bowl. Unroll and separate the dough into triangles. Melt 2 tbsp of butter. Take a marshmallow, dip it into the butter until all sides are coated. Roll the marshmallow in the sugar mixture. Place the coated marshmallow in the centre of a dough triangle. Fold the dough around the marshmallow and roll it until it's completely sealed. Place on a lined baking tray. Repeat with the rest of the dough! Bake at 180oC for 15-20 minutes. When you cut into the rolls the marshmallow will have disappeared and left an empty space!

Pray together...

Jesus, thank you that you took my place and died on the cross. Thank you that you came back to life to show that you are more powerful even than death. Thank you that you are mighty and loving, thank you for always loving me. Today I just want to say...

Praise together...



[1 2 3 Jesus is alive](#)

[O praise the name](#)

[The love of the Father](#)

[See what a morning](#)

