

Easter Day 2017 - Matthew 28: 1-10 - Charlie Boyle

We live for the most part in such a beautiful yet broken world. What with North Korea setting off test missiles in the past week and bombs disrupting Palm Sunday processions and killing Coptic Christians in Egypt, these are truly unsettling times. Yet today is a gift, that is why we call it the present. This morning I want to talk about the most important event in history. Christ's resurrection. It defines us, as Christians, an essential part of the Christian faith. Yet if we are not yet believers or atheists it also defines what we are against, what we don't believe in.

Come and see, He is risen ... Go and tell

⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. **Come and see** the place where he lay."

The angel invites the women to **come and see** where Jesus lay.

Why is the angel doing this? He has told them the body has gone.

Because the women were key witnesses they knew Jesus' body should have been there but the body has gone, they are going to be the ones who are going to tell others. They are going to be the first witnesses. It is not as if anyone actually saw what happened...

Nowadays, we might have well have said "*well can we find some CCTV footage?*"

Yet it has happened "**just as he said**".

This is all according to the plan that Jesus had told them about, according the scriptures that had told before of what would happen, how he would die and rise again.

Come and see is such an easy thing to say but equally we can be afraid too, so we need a gentle encouragement of a friend to guide us along the way. **Why not try and say to friends and neighbours ..come and see, when the next summer term card comes out with all those activities...come and see, whether it is Alpha starting on the 10th May or the tea parties, mother's union meetings, men's meetings, women's evenings, the fete, the Barn dance, stepping stones walks, or even Knit and natter which will now be every week...all you have to say is ...don't be afraid ...come and see, join with me.**

⁷Then the angel continues **go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.'** Now I have told you."

He is risen.

He is risen from the dead, the most extraordinary news.

The fact that God has raised Jesus becomes the identifying characteristic of God.

As I said earlier this is our theological starting point as a Christian, to believe in the resurrection. All human beings will find

who they are,

who they may be,

where they will be,

in relation to the figure of Jesus. We either believe in him and his resurrection or we don't, or we are unsure but let's be honest, that does define us. As we know from Paul's sermon in Acts 17 "He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all by raising him from the dead (v.31 Acts 17)

Once again, the future, the judgement, God's decisive fixing of his relationship with the world is all connected with Jesus and Jesus' resurrection. Yet there is also good news. In our belief in Him we are set free from our mistakes and sins, given complete freedom,

knowing we are forgiven and not defined by our past.

Yesterday was Holy Saturday or disappointment Saturday, a day when we remember Jesus lying in the tomb. We have been encourage to pray for those who have lost hope.

I received a text from an old friend....Pete Wilson.

He and I had shared the same flat, he too had been taken in by same Christian friends, during his divorce.

He came to our 9.30am service with his new family.

I had last seen him at New Wine, last year when he embraced Josh and I with hospitality and shared his lunch with us, an act of generosity. You see we could have both let our divorce define us and stayed in a place of bitterness and unforgiveness. In fact God blessed us both with new beginnings.

But we were both redeemed for our future in our belief in Jesus and his resurrection. That gives us all Hope. Whatever our situation, whether recently divorced/bereaved or less so, whether looking for new things to be involved in, new jobs, we are all forgiven, we do not need to be defined by our past.

That is often the reason why people feel better after they have been to Church, there is a sense of freedom and renewal taking place at the moment of absolution, at the moment of taking the bread and wine, knowing we are forgiven. We can move on, we have been restored, we have had an encounter with God.

Do you have that hope in the resurrection and life to come? Do you believe in Jesus, today could be the day of a new start. If you have not made that commitment then do take a copy of Why Easter...there is a short prayer at the back

Sorry for the mistakes I have made.

Thank you for dying on the cross for me.

Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit and give me a new start.

If you don't believe it can I remind you that you are not alone, there are many out there who have doubts and want to discover more. Doing a course like the Alpha course is a great way to explore and discuss it more, our next one starts on the 10th May. It will give yourself time to talk and think about the big questions of life.

So

Come and see

He has risen and finally

Finally ...**Go and tell**

We know is that there were witnesses to the risen Lord Jesus. In the same way that you are gathered here today and can see me, you can see what I am doing and tell others about what you have been up to today.

Go and tell.

Before me are some lovely wild flowers and by way of illustration and so that you can both recall and remember that it is by doing and telling that we practice our faith. I am going to give you something to tell those who you are seeing or having lunch with today...I am going to eat this flower.

Do you believe it?

Now you believe that because you have seen it for yourselves.

You see, we have belief in what we see and know.

The women went, they came and saw he was risen and the disciples have belief in what they saw and

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. **Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.**"

A third of the world's population believe and follow Christ because those very first disciples went and told others...

We can all go and tell. When we are excited about things it often leads us to spread the good news on doesn't it. If we have found something good we naturally tell others. **It is a bit like when someone, you know has been trying for a baby and they finally get to the stage of being able to tell others.** It is good news, you want to share it with others, you want to share their JOY.

So this Easter invite others to come and see, believe he Has risen and go and tell...

Have a Happy and joyous Easter....Amen.