

Readings

Colossians 3:1-4 (you are raised with Christ)

John 1:1-5

Matthew 28:1-10

Philippians 2 : 1 - 11

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So here's us - picking up cares and worries. Picking up bad habits speaking meanly about people behind their back, or not doing the things we're supposed to and they weight us down.. and they become a blockage between each other and God.

And along comes Jesus - all full of life and love. Never doing anything bad to anyone.

and he says - all the bad things you ever did - give them to me
all the bad things anyone ever did - give them to me.

he says - take my yolk upon you - where are you working? let me join in and do the hard bit
he says - cast your burdens, your worries, onto me, because I care for you

give them all to me..

And the weight of the brokenness of the world - carries him down, down down.

You can call it hell, the Jews called it Hades.

Jesus was never going to get in there - because he was far too good.

but he had to go there for 2 reasons

1 - to bury all the bad stuff we have ever, and will ever do, in a place where it can do no more harm

and 2 - because he went to go and set free the people who'd been sent there before..

Jews believed that heaven was only for God and a very few good people - like Abraham, Elijah and Methuselah.. al the rest went down. And Christians thought - that' not very fair - we know about Jesus, so we know what God was really like, What about those people before Jesus - why can't they have a chance to be saved and go to heaven?

So the bible tells of Jesus going down to depths to preach the gospel - he was busy between Good Friday and Easter Sunday - he went and said - do you want to follow me? And all those from Noah's flood and since - all heard him and were invited to follow him...

Because Jesus couldn't stay down there. Jesus couldn't stay dead. It was impossible for him.. as soon as I take the weight off this cork it will shoot back up - just like Jesus rose again on Easter Day -

He is Risen!!

And here's the thing.. When we follow Jesus - we join with him.. He shares with us, we share with him. We say it so many different ways - but it means the same thing. What happens to Jesus, will happen to us. So jus as he rises to new life - so we too rise to new life.. And although we may do bad things - if we keep given them to Jesus - they will slide off! they won't stick.

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We need Easter - the queen said

because today we remember when the impossible happened - a dead man came back to life and right now we need the impossible -we need a world to come back to life.

But there's more.. because Jesus did not come to a resuscitated life - to more of the same, like Lazarus, he came back to a resurrection life - life in a new way.

And we don't just want the world to go back to normal.. we want to find a way through to something new - to life in a new way..

because so much that is good has been found in this time - the kindness of strangers, the value of our nurses and doctors and social care providers, the value of our local stores or delivery drivers, our teachers and schools who are still working, the generosity we have, the bird song, the time spent with people we love, jigsaws, being creative, walking and cycling in our area, how nice it is without cars, how great it is that some of those who couldn't get to church can join in now, how quickly our planet and wildlife could recover if only we let it, the list goes on and on...

I wonder what you've found that's been better during this time.. write it down so you don't forget.

and we have a chance now, to make a new world - to not go back to normal, but to rise to resurrection life. This is the truth of Easter - the fact of Easter, that doesn't depend on our feelings, or even our faith. We might have to work for a new vision, we might have to work very hard - but it is possible - even as eternal life in Jesus is possible - if we want it.

yes - there is sadness and loss and grief, Christianity never promises to take them away or give us life in a bubble - but along side the why? or the how? there is also the yes! yes! yes!

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Lord's prayer

This is a time of Holy habits - I always said we should find some spiritual rucksacks and keep stuff ready for a day when we have no books or internet - some songs to sing, some prayers, some words of hope from the bible.

Well holy habits will help things feel normal, will help us to survive.

Here's 4! to keep you going.

Try to pray every day - even if its the Lord's prayer

Try to read the bible - just a few verses - why not read the gospels, and if you finish those, keep going!

Try to be thankful for something every day

and try to do good each day - you could phone a neighbour, or do an errand, or just a chore for someone in the house.. doing something will help you feel useful.