

## Easter Day 2020

### Bible readings:

- Acts 10: 34 – 43
- Matthew 28: 1-10

### Thoughts:

A very happy Easter everyone!

We hopefully will never have to experience an Easter like this one in 2020 again! What a strange celebration, having to celebrate together via Zoom or Utube! But nothing can change or undo what was accomplished on that first Easter Day! Jesus is risen! He is Risen indeed !!

I love the honesty of the Gospel accounts of the first Easter. For example in Matthew 28 verse 8: 'So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy ...' A total mix of emotions, their minds scrambled by the news given by the angel! If I had been there, I'm sure my mind would have been scrambled too! There is no attempt in the gospels to cover up the raw emotions and mixed reactions to the resurrection. As J.B. Philipps once wrote: 'It has the ring of truth!'. What we have in the gospels, and in the New Testament documents, are the eye witness accounts to the resurrection, by those who were there as it happened, and who met the risen Jesus in Person! It is powerful testimony!

Sometimes music can touch us at a deep level. I have been listening to a track from Hillsong entitled 'Oceans'. In this song are the following words:

*'You call me out upon the waters. The great unknown where feet may fail and there I find You in the mystery. In oceans deep my faith will stand.'*

*'I will call upon Your name and keep my eyes above the waves. When oceans rise my soul will rest in Your embrace. For I am yours and You are mine.'*

*'Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders. Let me walk upon the waters wherever You would call me. Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander and my faith will be made stronger, in the presence of my Saviour.'*

I find these words very apt for our shared experience of COVID-19. As Christians we are in living and immediate touch with the risen Jesus, with the living God, who by His Holy Spirit is with us, to resource us and to take us deeper into the mystery of our faith, in the context of our hurting, troubled world.

The amazing event of Jesus' resurrection has implications every moment of every day: Jesus is living, His Spirit is with us, and Jesus calls us to take this mystery to others, so that they, too, can know and experience the reality of resurrection life. The words of another Hillsong called 'Beautiful exchange' focus on the heart of the Easter events:

*'You were near though I was distant, disillusioned I was lost and insecure. Still mercy fought for my attention, You were waiting at the door. Then I let You in.'*

*'Trading Your life for my offenses; for my redemption You carried all the blame.  
Breaking the curse of our condition, perfection took our place.'*

And the chorus says: *'When only love could make a way, You gave Your life in a beautiful exchange. When only love could break these chains, You gave Your life in a beautiful exchange.'*

Many of us have experienced the truth of these words, and have found that the risen Jesus, who gave His life for us on the cross, breaking the curse of our human condition by dying for us, perfection for our imperfection, setting us free. Wow!

Easter is a celebration of triumph, of worship and praise, of deepest thanksgiving! *'Jesus, to Your name we give all the glory, to Your name we give all the praise; You're alive, our God everlasting; let Your face shine on us.'*

This Easter may we rejoice again in the wonder and victory of Jesus' resurrection? We live because He lives. We may not understand it all, we may be unsure as to how all the pieces of the Christian puzzle fit together, but, as the hymn says, *'This I know, He heals the broken-hearted and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear, and lifts the burden from the heavy-laden, for yet the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.'*

The final verse of that great hymn says:

*'I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship, when, at His bidding, ev'ry storm is stilled, or who can say how great the jubilation when ev'ry heart with perfect love is filled. But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture, and myriad, myriad human voices sing, and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer: At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!'*

My friends, may something of that joy and wonder fill your heart and mine this Easter! Yes, we may be in a very unusual situation, but the truth we celebrate today cannot be undone. Jesus is risen, He is alive, and we can know His love, light and life even in the darkest of circumstances. May we all shine with the light of Christ in our hearts, and may every day be a resurrection day in the truth of His love.

Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your amazing plan in the Lord Jesus. Thank you that He died for us at Calvary; thank you that He is risen, and that we can know Your love and risen power today, and everyday. In Jesus' all powerful Name. Amen.