

Easter Day

12 April 2020, 11am

Christ Church New Southgate & Friern Barnet

Reading: Matthew 28.1-10

(Especially vs 5-7) 5 The angel spoke to the women. "You must not be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. 7 Go quickly now, and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!' Remember what I have told you."

Prayer

Let's pray before we open up God's word together. Holy Spirit help us to see and look afresh at this story of Easter. Thank you for the accounts we have from the women at the tomb and the stories of faith that have come from their bold witness. Help us to come and see you afresh today. Amen.

Sermon

'You must not be afraid' – Jesus brings new life

Without doubt one of my favourite games is an Easter egg hunt. Have you taken part in an Easter egg hunt today yet? So the rules of this game are – wait for the Easter bunny/or a grown up with bunny ears to hide the eggs in the garden, or your house or wherever you are playing.

When all the eggs are hidden, you must look, see what you can find, hunt down those beautiful chocolate eggs and squeal with delight when you've found them and put them in your basket or bucket, or straight into your mouth.

On the first Easter Sunday, the women that loved Jesus and knew he was the most amazing friend ever were looking for him. They had gotten up super early in the morning and had gone to the last place they'd seen him, in the garden.

Sadly the women had watched Jesus die on the cross, they'd watched him be taken down, and they knew where his body had been buried. So they were looking in different way, they were looking to be close to Jesus because they were sad, their hearts were broken. When they arrived, they thought they would see Jesus' tomb.

But instead they saw an angel, who then rolled back the stone and sat on it. All the soldiers were scared witless and fainted. But the angel said to the women – you must not be afraid. You must not be afraid. And they did not faint.

The angel said – I know you're looking for Jesus – he is not here, he has been raised from death. What had been hidden away in a tomb, had come to light.

So much in our world today had been hidden. Until the coronavirus struck, we didn't realise who really was essential in our world. Our hidden workers, those who are so often ignored – delivery drivers, supermarket workers, warehouse staff, have come to light and we all know now how critical these people are.

It was hidden how stretched NHS resources were, and now our support of them is ringing in our ears through pots, pans and clapping hands. Hidden were the bonds of our friendships, relationships, neighbours and communities, and now these have come to light.

As the women see the empty tomb and realise that Jesus is alive – they are not afraid of this new life. Life bursting from the ground, from the very heart of God. Jesus has been raised from death, no one else could do that but God. Suddenly they could see – we are not alone! God has not left us to rot but has sent us a Saviour – and now we can see. Now we have new life in him and he is before us saying peace – rejoice this is the new day.

Life now is different isn't it? All that was hidden has come to light. And we must not be afraid. Life will not be the same again after lockdown. Life with God now is different too, for we are hidden with God as we seek him, as we look for him, we too are buried.

Our old lives have gone, and we start to live a new life. A life that looks for Jesus in every situation and finds him with God, for Jesus has his being with God. Our new life is one that belongs with Jesus and belongs to God.

Cadburys have released an Easter egg hunt advert. The advert begins with two grandchildren arriving at their granddads flat. The younger runs around searching for eggs, the older teenager, looks to the spare room shelf and spies his egg.

He looks there because he's been on this egg hunt before, he looks to that place because he knows his granddad always puts out an egg for him, even though he feels a bit big for an Easter egg hunt. He looks because he knows his granddad loves him and will always put one out for him.

May we look likewise for Jesus this Easter, for our search for him will always find him with all the goodness and sweetness that knowing him brings, for the one who sent him, loves us, always has, and always will and will always help us to find new life in Christ. Go look for him and find new life in Christ. Amen.