

Easter Sunday

Well here we are celebrating Easter again. It has of course been quite an eventful few days with everything that goes on in Holy Week. The last supper and the washing of the feet. Jesus' arrest and trial, his ill treatment and his journey to the cross. His sense of pain and even abandonment as he was nailed to the cross and lifted up for all to see. What a death. So public and one might say shameful. Pain is not something to be recommended, whether it's physical or mental and we all experience it in one way or another, some more than others. Shame and humiliation isn't very nice either whether it's your fault or not and some people are dealt a fair bit of that. We're all quite governed by what's going on in our minds a lot of the time and this might sometimes overshadow other things and events that are going on around us. State of mind might also blot out things that are going on further away as well, much of which we need to remember, because it's quite shocking and tragic.

The events of Christ's passion are really quite shocking and when we listen to the crucifixion story as we have done this past week, we surely can't fail to be moved; to feel sad; to feel something of the pain of what Jesus and yes his disciples went through. Perhaps at times we might even feel a bit of shame if we're not entering into the story as much as we might. Or we might in our Christian lives, sometimes feel ashamed that we've run away from our discipleship with Jesus. Other events in our lives mean that we might push Jesus out and act like we don't know him. We don't live a life that is obvious that we're actually supposed to be having a real relationship with this person called Jesus. We're not putting it out there like we should be doing.

Well we are all human after all and we sometimes run away when things get difficult. Look at the disciples as they fled at Jesus' arrest. Look at Peter when he denied he even knew Jesus. Three times he does it until the cock crows a second time and then the shame hits him as he breaks down and cries. But Jesus still loves Peter and all who fled away. He wants them to know that all will be okay. He did after all give them a fair few hints, but that wasn't so easy for them to see, especially in the time of trial. And it's not always easy for us to see in the more trying times. But Jesus, the one who goes through trying times to put it mildly, want us to know we've just got to stick with him. Jesus shows us the way and the way is with him. After Jesus death, none of Jesus friends knew the way. They didn't know which way they were going. They might have known the way to the tomb, but that's about it. But then that was a start, for an empty tomb meant that Jesus was elsewhere; not dead as they still thought, but alive. They couldn't quite see that at first. Mary Magdalene even looked at Jesus and through her tears thought he was the gardener. But when he called her name her eyes were opened and from her heart she called him teacher. After being told by Mary Magdalene that the tomb was empty, Peter and the disciple Jesus loved, had previously just ran to the tomb. They 'went in and saw and believed'. But they only saw and believed that the tomb was empty. They did not 'see' in the scripture that Jesus 'must rise from the dead.' And that is what Jesus has done. That would become good news for them, first from Mary Magdalene and secondly when they see the risen Jesus himself. There is no turning away from Jesus now, or feeling sad that he's dead and gone. For Jesus is alive and very much here! And just as he was alive for his disciples and all who believed then, he is alive for us now. Whatever is going on in our lives; which might mean we're blotting Jesus or just failing to see him when we're pre-occupied with other things; Jesus wants us to know he is there. Indeed, Jesus is standing right in front of our unopened eyes he so want us to open. Because when open them and see the risen Lord, our Lord and Saviour who has been through the bad times in order to reach the good; we also will want to call him by name and tell others that from death comes life. Our journey doesn't stop at the tomb, but rather it being empty sets us off on a wonderful journey with the one who shows us the way.

Amen