

A Easter Day

16th April 17

Place: St Mary's

Theme: 'I have seen the
Lord'

John 20.1-18

- ◆ How deep a mystery this is!
- ◆ What has happened? When it first happened no one even noticed it. When those closest to Jesus started to notice it, it was a few at a time. Some believed while others were still lost in grief and despair.
- ◆ Everything has changed, yet it is easily overlooked.
- ◆ 'Mary has seen the Lord.' He has called her by name.
- ◆ What has she seen?
- ◆ We want to know. We want to understand. We want to grasp what has happened and move on to the next thing.
- ◆ There are two things that resurrection doesn't mean. First it doesn't mean resuscitation of the kind that goes on at St Georges and other hospitals. It doesn't mean that when things go wrong God will put them back to the way they were before. It doesn't mean that things carry on as usual, only a bit better.
- ◆ A lot of people who believe in life after death basically hope that things will carry on before, only with none of the difficult stuff. This is not what Easter promises us.

- ◆ Second it doesn't mean that the disciples just started to feel better on their own on Easter Day. They decided it wasn't as bad as all that and that some of the things Jesus said were quite good, so they would carry on teach them. Resurrection is not simply a spiritual or emotional thing.
- ◆ That is just ridiculous. The followers of Jesus were deeply traumatised, bereaved and in fear of their life on Easter Day. They were not trying to cheer each other up and look on the bright side. Mary saw the Lord! – and they did not believe her – or at least not at first.
- ◆ The resurrection of Christ involves our bodies and senses, it involves Christ's body. It has too. They are the only places we live. They are God's beloved creation and the whole world is, not just our souls. Christ died to save the whole world not just a floaty, airyfairy un-pin-downable part of us. The risen Christ eats breakfast, asks Thomas if he wants to put his hand in his wounds, walks alongside the travellers on the Emmaus Road.
- ◆ So what was it that Mary saw when she saw the Lord?
- ◆ I don't know. Nobody knows. She saw something that no one had seen before, because God had never done this before. This was not the same thing at all as the raising of Lazarus. That was more like a resuscitation. Lazarus grew old and died after it.

- ◆ Because of the Cross, everything is changing. Because of Easter day everything has changed, but it is really hard to see.
- ◆ So what did Mary see?
- ◆ Well whatever it was she saw she did not recognise Jesus straight away. Most of the people who meet the risen Christ did not recognise Him at first. Why was that?
- ◆ Maybe it was that they knew he was dead to they weren't expecting to see him.
- ◆ Maybe it was that he looked different. After all they all knew Jesus very well. They had lived and travelled together for three years; day in, day out.
- ◆ Paul writing before the first gospels were written says that the relationship between a resurrected body and the body they had before death is like the relationship between a grain of wheat that is buried in the soil and the plant that grows from it. It is the same thing, but it is not the same thing and looks completely different.
- ◆ We can't understand the resurrection. It is beyond us, but we can experience it, we can meet the risen Christ and be transformed by him just as the first disciples were.
- ◆ We cannot understand it because God is doing a new thing.
- ◆ God is transforming creation in ways that are beyond our hopes or imagining.

- ◆ God is making a new creation starting on Easter Day.
- ◆ We need to keep our eyes open. We need to keep looking. We need to keep seeking. We need to remember that we cannot understand, we can only meet and know and start to see what God is doing.
- ◆ It won't happen because we try hard, or we are very good, or we pray hard, or we are very clever or very rich. It comes as God's great gift. It comes as God's gift to all who are seeking it, to all who open their hearts to Jesus Christ his Son, to all who stay with him seeking the truth despite everything. God is doing something better than we can either hope or imagine. In Christ he is leading us to his Kingdom.
- ◆ God is faithful, God is stronger than death. When we meet God in the Risen Christ we see everything differently. We see the grief and glory of this beautiful broken world for what it is. We can rejoice in the wonder of creation knowing that the enduring goodness and faithfulness of God cannot be defeated by human sin and death. We can live this life faithfully, hopefully and above all joyfully because we know that God cannot be defeated.
Alleluia, Christ is Risen.