

Matthew 28.1-10

He is Risen!

Amington St Editha

Easter Sunday 16 April 2017

Excited?

I saw Arnold Schwarzenegger eating a chocolate egg. I said, 'I bet I know what your favourite Christian festival is.' He said, 'You have to love Easter, baby.'¹

Can anyone tell me a time in their life when they have been *really* excited? Some examples:

-] Birthday
-] Christmas day
-] Wedding day
-] Birth of a child / grandchild / great grandchild (my best man's first son Isaac, and me before full-time ministry)
-] Passing driving test (Lydia)
-] First pay cheque (my first credit card bill!)

¹ Tim Vine: <http://premierjokes.com/tim-vine-jokes.html>

Easter Morning

Jesus' friends were definitely *not* excited on Easter morning. Jesus had been killed by the Romans on Friday. They were going to the garden to see the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid.

They had thought Jesus was special. They had thought he was God's chosen king, who was going to set God's people free. Jesus said he would show them the way to find God, that he was the *only* way to find God.

But instead, he was dead. He had failed. He was wrong. All that hope, all that excitement, was for nothing.

That's how Jesus' friends felt as they trudged to the garden that morning. In my head it was a grey, miserable, wet spring morning like in England.

They arrived in the garden to a scene of utter chaos.

The **guards**, who were there to stop anyone from stealing Jesus' body, were **flat out on the floor, unconscious**.

The **huge stone**, which was there to cover the entrance to the tomb, was **rolled aside**.

On top of the stone was sitting an angel, dazzling white, bright like lightning.

The women went from being upset, to being scared! **‘Don’t be afraid,’ the angel said** – as if! They were terrified! I expect you would be, too.

‘You are looking for Jesus,’ the angel said, **‘But he is not here; he has risen, just as he said!’**

The women looked inside the tomb – and Jesus wasn’t there! The tomb was empty, and his body was gone! The Bible says they were still **afraid**, but also a little bit excited – what was going on?

The women hurried away to tell Jesus’ other friends, but suddenly Jesus appeared in front of them.

‘Hi,’ he said. The women were so pleased to see him they **threw their arms around him**. He told them not to be afraid, exactly like the angel had. Then he told them not to stay there, but to go and tell his other friends that he was alive.

Now, they really were **∫** excited.

Because Jesus was **alive!!**

Everything he said about himself, was *true*. Everything he said about God, was *true*. Everything he said about the world, about us, was *true*.

During Jesus' trial the governor asked, 'What is truth?' The answer is this: Jesus is the way, Jesus is the truth, Jesus is the life!

Everyone thought Jesus had failed, but he hadn't, he had *won*. They thought he had come to defeat the Romans, but he had come to conquer death itself.

One of Jesus' closest friends once told him, 'You have the words of eternal life. Where else would we go?'

§ All those things we get excited about, they are all wonderful. They are all good news, and they are all worth celebrating. We should and do celebrate them as a church family as well.

§ But the best news of all, the news that changes everything, the news that shows God is more powerful even than death, the news that gives us hope, is this:

§ Jesus... § is... § Alive!! Hallelujah!!

If you want to find out more about that wonderful news... if you want to explore the meaning of life, what it's all about... if you want to find out what Jesus' friend meant when he said, 'you have the words of eternal life'... why not join our Alpha course which explores those very questions? It starts this coming Saturday, at 10am. We have some flyers at the back if you want to take some away with you, for yourself or to invite someone else.

Remember the best news of all: Jesus is alive!

Let's pray.

Dear God,

Thank you for that first Easter day.

Thank you that the stone was rolled away.

Thank you that our friend came back to stay.

Starting on that first Easter day.

Amen.

Prayer taken from

<http://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/61/easter-sunday-morning>