

Easter Day  
17-04-2022  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Acts 10: 34-43      Peter testifies about Jesus  
                                 God accepts all through his death and resurrection

Easter Anthem      Jesus conquers death, All made alive in Christ

1 Corinthians 15:19-26    Our faith rests on the resurrection

John 20: 1-18      Jesus is risen from the dead and  
                                 appears to Mary Magdalene

### Introduction

At the heart of the Christian faith is that around 2000 years ago Jesus rose from the dead.

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus today, I would like to look at it's significance and then look at two questions:-

What does it mean for us? What do we do?

### Jesus Rose from the Dead

Firstly, let us look at what was central for the first Christians, and what is at the heart of Christianity today– that Jesus rose from the dead.

The experience of those first followers of Jesus was that – “Jesus is Alive”. It seemed like a very crazy thing to believe. When they told Thomas, who wasn't with them initially, he didn't believe. He knew that when the Romans killed people, they were dead, and so why would you believe something like that. But they believed because it was what they saw. Later when Thomas did see Jesus, he did believe, and he declared, “My Lord, and my God.”

In the Bible readings set down for today, from both Matthew and John's Gospels, we hear how the first witness to the resurrection, was actually Mary Magdalene. If those first disciples of Jesus were going to make up a story of the resurrection, they most certainly would not have written Mary into it. Culturally at that time it was only males who could act as witnesses in court, so if they were going to write anyone in, it would have been one of the men. The fact that the account of the story has Mary as the first witness, leads many historians to believe, that the story, as we have it, must be true and authentic.

But the resurrection from the dead is still a big thing to believe. Some people say, one of the reasons they can't believe Christianity, is because it defies the laws of nature.

But I think that is one of the points of the resurrection. If we believe in a God who created the universe, and if we believe in a God who set the laws of nature for this world we live in, then surely this God, has the ability to control what happens in this world.

The miraculous is not something that disqualifies God, but rather something that points to the existence of God. As philosophers might say, "this is something big to dwell on". It is beyond our understanding of the natural world, but it does not mean that it is not real, or that it is not true.

Love is something that can't be easily defined in physical terms, but this does not make it less real, or less true.

So how can we know about the resurrection? I believe we can know just like we can know about other historical events that have occurred. We have Witnesses. That's how history works. Witnesses who were willing to give even their lives to attest to the resurrection of Jesus.

I believe the resurrection of Jesus is the defining moment in world history.

What does it mean for us?

So, what does this mean for us?

In the reading from the Book of Acts we hear these words, "43All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:43)

We are forgiven!! But why do we need to be forgiven?

The Bible explains to us that we are created by God, and made to live in relationship with God. But the first humans turned away from God, and we do to, and so we are all effected by a thing the Bible calls "sin", as it cuts us of from God's love.

In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we can receive forgiveness for our sin and be reconciled to God.

I don't think this word, "sin" is well understood in our society. If we think of someone who is a sinner then it's probably someone in jail, but it's certainly not me. But the bible tells us that "all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God." So, sin is not something that really bad people need to worry about, it is

a problem for each and every one of us. We only have to look around at the world to see this makes sense. None of us are perfect.

Our sins can be forgiven if we accept what Jesus has done for us on the Cross. But it doesn't end there, Jesus didn't stay dead. His resurrection gave those first disciples Hope.

Those first followers of Jesus, believed who he was, and what he had come for, and were filled with the Holy Spirit. It gave them such a wonderful hope that they couldn't stop telling others about Jesus.

We can live with this hope. Not only as something which awaits us beyond the grave, but as something that we can grasp onto Here and Now.

### What do we do?

So, what do we do, and how do we live into this Hope? Jesus didn't just tell people to believe that he came to Earth as God's Son. He called his disciples to follow him. So, just like the first disciples of Jesus, we are called to join together and do all the things that Jesus told those first followers to do.

We are called to take our part in the life and faith of the church. We are called to be a part of our local Christian community to support one another and to build one another up. We are called to live into and share the Good News of Jesus with others.

### Conclusion

At the heart of the Christian Faith is knowing that we are made to live in relationship with God. Our human nature cuts us off from God, but in God's love and mercy, God has given us Jesus, so that our relationship with God can be restored.

Easter calls us to remember the sacrifice of the crucifixion and the miracle of the resurrection, and that in Jesus we have access to God.

It's up to us to take a hold of it and to live into it. God won't force us to do anything, he loves us too much for that. But God is always there waiting for us to repent and come back.

May God bless and strengthen you all, as you seek to live out your main purpose in life, by being in relationship with God through Jesus, and sharing the love of God with those around you. Amen.