

Easter Sunday. April 01st 2018.

READ: Luke 23: 54 through to 24: 12

Jesus did not leap from Palm Sunday straight to Resurrection Sunday. Jesus did not even leap from the supper together on the Thursday of Holy Week to the crucifixion.

REMINDE OURSELVES. At our **Maundy Thursday Supper** and celebration of the last Passover Supper that Jesus ate with his disciples we heard of his stripping down, wrapping a towel around his waist like a servant and washing their feet and commanding them to love one another in the same way he had demonstrated.

Having sung a hymn, they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane and Jesus experienced the psychological crushing of facing his impending suffering and death and knowing the failure of his friends to watch and pray with him. I spoke of his longing to be in the company of his friends and yet they were emotionally unable to sustain this watch with him. Following his betrayal by a disciple he was moved through the night from one official to another, one gorgeous residence to another power house being abused and brutalised by religious leaders (Annas, Caiaphas) and questioned by Pilate and Herod and Pilate again. In the Roman barracks the abuse was Barbaric to the level of great cruelty. (No friend stood by him and one of his closest friends even denied knowing him 3 times and we know Jesus witnessed at least one of these denials and knew about the others).

In our Good Friday Reflection together, we remembered that at 9 o'clock on the Friday morning his crucifixion began, and the physical and spiritual torment lasted until 3 in the afternoon when he gave up his spirit and died. He was taken down from the cross and his naked body wrapped in a linen cloth and placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea before the Sabbath began at sunset Friday and the Jews went into lock down until sunrise on the Sunday. The tomb had a massive stone rolled in front of it and a seal and a guard were placed there.

Jesus endured so much, and we considered that we cannot appreciate the extent of the love of Jesus unless we consider the depth of his passion and suffering. Nor can we realise the inhumanity and depth of the fallenness of humanity until we reflect on those events which preceded the crucifixion. The level of hatred he experienced at the hands of sinful humanity was great (**Hebrews 12:3**). His broken and dead body lay in the tomb from sunset Friday to sunrise Sunday accompanied it is suggested in the Gospels by the presence and protection of angels.

Even since we met on Good Friday much has happened in our remembrance of key events. The women and others **had waited a long time.** From our reading **we see that they had spent some time together preparing the spices and perfume for the body of Jesus and left it to “marinate”** through Friday night, all day Saturday and through the night while they “rested” (*) as God’s Law required. (*) HESUCHAZO – to be still, to cease from labour, to hold one’s peace, being silent).

This was an enforced wait – as they presumably first talked and then waited in silent agony the wonderful smells would have filled the house. As they maybe huddled together for comfort or avoided contact in an effort to avoid distress the smell that reminded them of death even though designed to counter the smell of corruption. (2C 2:6)

At the earliest opportunity (still in the dark to sunrise phase) and even though the men lagged behind (definitely a gender gap here) the women went back to the tomb – with a growing awareness that they would not be physically strong enough to roll the stone back to be able to get to Jesus body to apply the spices. (Mark 16:3)

By the time Mary Magdalene and the other women (Mark 16: 1, Mary the mother of James and Salome) also Joanna (24:10) **arrived at the tomb** at sunrise the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty except for the shroud and napkin and a few angelic messengers/ spiritual soldiers in the vicinity.

Why do you look for the living among the dead? The angel asked. He is not here but has risen! (Luke 24: 5 -6)

Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise. (vv6,7)

And they remembered his words.

How often we forget what Jesus says to us. How often we forget that he is alive.

Sometimes I wish I'd wait a little longer in my grief. Stay in my tears a few more minutes instead of rushing away from a painful sight, or brushing aside appropriate mourning for something more pleasant.

Mary sat with her tears long enough to peer into the tomb and see something the men hadn't seen. Angels. They asked her why she was crying. She gave the most telling answer:

"They have taken away my Lord" (John 20:13). Kelly Minter (TGC – the gospel coalition)

"My Lord" – Mary personally owned Jesus as Jesus personally owned her.

Mary also lingered by the tomb long enough to meet the "gardener". When she failed to recognise him and questioned him, "Where have you put him?" he simply said "Mary!". The women grabbed his feet and were commissioned by Jesus to be the first human messengers of his resurrection. "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me". (Matthew)

Change for us? Not just future hope: resurrection body and the gift of immortality but raised to life with Christ now and need to put away actions that lead to death. Read **Colossians 3: 1 – 4a.**