

The Way x16. Sunday 21 April 2019.

Jesus makes a Way through death. EASTER SUNDAY.

READ: Luke 24: 36 - 49.

The seasons come and the seasons go. Time passes and becomes time present. *There is a time for ever purpose under heaven - a time to be born and a time to die...* We are in Spring again. Every Sunday is the Lord's Day (*) when we meet together and today is Easter Sunday when we specifically name and celebrate Resurrection – the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of all who die.

Throughout Easter week I have prompted you to think (according to the teachings of Jesus) that **(John 12: 23 – 24) A grain of wheat remains no more than a single grain unless it is dropped into the ground and dies. If it does die, then it produces many grains.**

Today we are here as the fruit of the One who died for us, who was buried...and 3 days later rose to life – never to die again. From one death, the death of Jesus of Nazareth – innumerable people have entered into a fullness of life and relationship with God now and future. A great harvest has been reaped and is still growing. But without death there is no life. Without physical death there is no physical resurrection.



The Lord's Day (*) in Christianity is generally Sunday, the principal day of communal worship. It is observed by most Christians as the weekly memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is said in the canonical Gospels to have been witnessed alive from the dead early on the first day of the week (**). *Revelation 1: 10. Acts 20:7 (**).*

When the 2 disciples met Jesus on the Road to Emmaus and finally recognized him as he broke bread, they rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples and specifically the eleven were already saying – *The Lord is risen indeed!* As the two told of their encounter with Jesus – ***suddenly the Lord himself stood among them and said to them, Peace, be with you.***

Their response seems to be unsurprising or perhaps surprising – **although they were saying “the Lord is risen” – they had obviously not assimilated, absorbed, reflected on what that meant because when they see him among them, they are terrified!** (They think that he is a ghost – the spirit of Jesus). So, he asks them why they are alarmed and their minds full of doubts.

How would you react if Jesus stood among us now so that we could see him?... Jesus goes out of his way not just on this occasion but on numerous occasions

over a period of 40 days (*Acts 1: 3 after his death he appeared to them in many ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive. They saw him and he talked to them about the Kingdom of God...and told them not to leave Jerusalem until they were baptised with the Holy Spirt...*)

And Luke the writer of this Gospel and the Acts describes how Jesus established that his was a physical/ bodily resurrection and not just a spiritual one. Jesus told them to **look and see** the scars on his hands and feet and also to **feel** his flesh and bone body.

But they still could not believe it was a bodily resurrection, but they were full of joy and wonder. They had emotions and hunger within and yet they were not full of belief about a bodily resurrection, so **he asked for something to eat** and they gave him a piece of cooked fish which he ate in front of them.

Then Jesus did something else for them (in the same chapter Luke records that he also did this for the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus) – he **reminded them that when he was with them, before his death that he'd already told them that this would happen according to the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**

But since they still seemed unable to put it all together and believe **Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, This is what is written, the Messiah must suffer and rise from death 3 days later, and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached in all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.**

You are witnesses of these things. And I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised (Trinitarian). But you must wait in the city until the power from above comes upon you.

The lessons from this are clear and for our learning today: we have heard about the teaching that the Messiah will suffer, die and 2 days later rise bodily BUT do we understand the Scriptures, and do we believe?

Have we moved through the seasons of life from the acceptance of a child to the faith and confidence of an adult believer in the teaching of Jesus? Each of us needs to ask Jesus to explain the Scriptures to us **by opening our minds...**

Are we experiencing and knowing the risen Jesus as we read the Bible, as we worship God and break bread together, as we struggle with life and also enjoy God's good gifts? **Are we regularly waiting in God's presence to know the presence of Jesus and the renewal and filling of the Holy Spirit?** To do this we ourselves will have to die and give up some of our wrong ideas, attitudes and understandings.

READ: John 12: 23 – 36. If we want to serve Jesus, we must follow Jesus.