

Easter Day - 8am  
Year C - 17/4/2022

Acts 10:34-43  
Psalm: 118  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
Luke 24:1-12

**In the name of the Trinity; Creator, Redeemer, and Life-Giver...**

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, once described the resurrection as ‘the second big bang’, an event as great and as explosive as at the very beginning. The resurrection, he said, is God’s re-creation of the world. It’s a potent reminder to us that God is utterly faithful to God’s creation, from beginning to end. God will have the last word, just as God spoke the very first word.

The same power as in the creation of the world is again at play in the raising of Jesus from the dead: the same burst of energy and light, the same abundant pouring forth of life—life out of nothing, life from the dead.

In light of this description of the resurrection, then, how odd are the words spoken by the male disciples, upon hearing Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, and the other women tell them what they had encountered when they arrived at the tomb. Listen again to how Luke describes their reaction - “But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.” (Luke 24:11).

An idle tale? Hardly an *idle* tale, I would have thought!! Maybe a truly fantastical tale, gentlemen, but hardly an *idle* one!! So, my question is why were these disciples so slow to believe - why did they not remember what Jesus had promised them? Some cruel people might just say, well they’re males, after all - very slow to believe what any woman tells them!

I suspect it’s more than that, of course. It seems to me that they have forgotten... they are so mired in their own grief and despair since the events of Good Friday that they have forgotten how to believe. Convinced that Jesus’s death is the end of everything, they’ve completely forgotten anything Jesus has said to them.

They've forgotten all the promises and the words of comfort and assurance. In other words, fundamentally they've forgotten what God is like. Their experience of grief and disappointment and hopelessness has outweighed everything else, and blotted any other words but words of loss and despair. They think that death has had the last word. They're trapped in their own forgetfulness.

And I'd have to say, there are plenty of times, when I look around at this world in which we live, that I'm tempted to fall into the same despair. It comes from the conviction, deep down, that things can't change, that the world will always be this way, and that there's nothing I can do to make a difference.

And that's what forgetfulness is about. It's the condition, quite simply, of forgetting about God. It happens when we look at our lives, at the world around us, and feel only despair; we leave out the most important factor in the equation: the creative and re-creative presence of God.

The gospel today, then, on this Easter morning, is a call to remembrance. The resurrection is, as Rowan Williams described in those words with which I began, God's wake-up call, the dynamic reminder of God's presence even in our darkest hour.

And so this morning the gospel summons us to a life of remembrance. We're called to remember who this God is, the one who has created the world, who has lovingly formed each one of us, and who will not abandon us.

The God we remember today is the God who is faithful to that creation, whose faithfulness is symbolised above all in raising of God's Son to life—Jesus Christ, our risen Lord, the hope of our resurrection, the overcoming of death for us and for the whole creation. We're called to remember this Easter God, the one who brings life out of darkness, joy out of pain, hope out of despair. The Easter God is the one who, in Christ, shows us that God has the last word: on your life and mine.

Today - not least in the action of the renewal of our baptismal vows - we return to the beginning of our stories, our common story, beckoned by him who finds us in all things of our flesh, all our times of forgetfulness, and leads us back to the God of hope whose Cross is our tree of life, even - and especially - on Easter morning.

It may seem strange to you that here, on Easter Morning, I am going to finish with the prayer with which we completed our sombre service on Good Friday. And yet, I think this prayer holds together what it is we trust and hope for - that it holds the words of hope and promise that the male disciples in our Gospel seemed unable to recall or believe.

May we depart from the holy mystery of this celebration, a little wary perhaps, but strangely hopeful by these words:

Lord Jesus Christ, the story of your suffering is written on our hearts,  
and the salvation of the world is in your outstretched hands. Keep  
your victory always before our eyes, your praise on our lips, and your  
peace in our lives.

May God's peace be upon you all, and may your Easter be a holy and blessed one.

In the name of God. Amen.