

**“IT’LL NEVER BE THE SAME”**

***John 20:1-18***

Easter Sunday – it’s a day of emotion, excitement, elation. For most of us it means a holiday, Easter eggs, time with family and friends, celebration in church. For the first followers of Jesus it was even more emotional and exciting. They’d never experienced anything like it before. It was all new. It was very unsettling. Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb where Jesus’ body was supposed to be and finds it empty. She rushes to tell the others and Peter and John run all the way to the tomb to find that Mary’s right. Later that day they meet Jesus – alive, real, speaking to them and eating with them.

John continues the story in his gospel – as do the other gospel writers. He tells us about the next few days, more encounters with Jesus, more amazing things happening. Then what? Well, life goes on. Some of the followers of Jesus go back to their fishing boats. The day-to-day tasks have to be done. There are chores to do, errands to run, lives to lead. And if we read on into *Acts* where Luke tells us about how the Church started, we find that life has to go on. People face problems, get ill, cope with bereavement, struggle through all kinds of difficulties. Life just goes on and on.

Easter might break our routine with a couple of days of celebration, but it won’t be long before we’re back to the usual stuff. There will still be clothes to wash, meals to cook, homes to clean. We’ll still have to go to school and work. The weekly activities will continue here at church and all the humdrum activities will go on and on.

Jesus might have broken into our lives and brought us excitement and joy as we first get to know him and find ourselves committed to him. He may have touched us in special ways through the work of his Holy Spirit. And we enjoy the excitement – but then things get back to normal, life goes on and on as before. Easter’s a fun time, but we soon get back to what it was like before.

Except, of course, that it’s not the same, is it? Simon, John, Mary and all the other followers of Jesus had their lives transformed by what happened on Easter Sunday. They went forward with the knowledge that Jesus was alive and could make a difference to them. Of course they encountered problems – plenty of them, and many that were due precisely to their following Jesus. They still got ill and struggled with the ups and downs of life. They still had to eat and look after themselves and their families, but they could do those things with the knowledge that Jesus was alive and, through his Holy Spirit, he was with them. Life might still throw up the same old stuff, but their attitude to it had changed, they could look at things in a new light, they were different from the inside. And they knew that there was more to life than just what they were experiencing day by day – there was an eternal future with Jesus waiting for them. Things would never be the same again.

Our routines continue as a church. It may be the same things which appear on the notice sheet each week. We may still find ourselves going to the same groups, saying the same prayers, singing the same hymns, reading the same stories in the Bible – but it is all enlivened by Jesus. Indeed, if it wasn't for Jesus and what happened at Easter there would be no point to any of the things that we do together. The presence and the power of Jesus' Holy Spirit makes a difference. We know that there are even greater things in store for us if we keep on trusting him. It'll never be the same again.

And in our own daily lives we find things are transformed. Within the rhythm of our humdrum lives we have a new sense of purpose in all that we do. Jesus is in it – whether it's washing up or ironing or revising for exams or travelling to work or talking to clients or collecting our pensions or having lunch with friends or reading a book – Jesus is there. His presence – his living presence – makes a difference. Our world is transformed. Our attitudes are renewed. Fear gives way to joy. Anxiety gives way to peace. Confusion gives way to serenity. Where once we might have been bored, we can now see Jesus at work and trace the finger of God writing the script of our lives.

Because of today, things'll never be the same again. Jesus is alive. His Holy Spirit lives in us. We are no longer the people we once were and Jesus continues his changing and transforming work in our lives. When Mary met Jesus outside the tomb she didn't recognise him initially, because in some way he was different. Her world had changed. Our world changes as we encounter Jesus and acknowledge his love and his life. If you want things to be different, ask Jesus and he will come and ensure that things'll never be the same again.