

## HAPPY EASTER



Today, Easter Sunday, we celebrate new life & fresh hope. Some of us will have exchanged cards with dramatic sunrises & piercing light emanating from an empty tomb. Many will eat chocolate Easter Eggs & Helen & I enjoy the lamb roast tradition on this day of resurrection celebration.

Yet when we consider the traumatic events of Good Friday, Jesus' betrayal & His trial, the agitated crowds, His hideous beating and the Roman signature crucifixion, we sense the overwhelming chillingly dark presence of death, and I think we necessarily pause! We reflect on Christ's death & how could that be, and perhaps on our own future death & when & how that might be, or on how we've already seen death through the passing of loved ones & we remember how we've reacted, and that no matter how prepared we may be, when we encounter death close up, it still punches us hard in the stomach &

leaves us breathless. Then we encourage ourselves as we think of Paul saying in 1 Cor. 15:26, "*The last enemy to be destroyed is death*" & we cry out, 'HALLELUJAH', death will ultimately not exist. We see our future in Rev. 21:3-4, "*Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people & He will dwell with them. They will be His people & God Himself will be with them & be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. **There will be no more death** or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*" We are rooted in resurrection hope.

"That first easter day was the greatest turnaround in the history of the world. God took what was an apparent tragedy and turned it into the greatest triumph" (Nicky Gumbel). When Jesus died on the cross, God intervened in humanity as seen in Matthew 27:51 "*the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom*". This curtain was 60 feet high, 30 feet wide and 4 inches thick. It took 300 priests to be able to lift it. God

physically somehow reached down & tore it from top to bottom, indicating His break into our humanity. The old covenant had ended & there was a new covenant, sealed with the broken body & spilt blood of Jesus, our sacrificial lamb (Hebrews 9-10).

When my mum passed away 8 years ago, at her funeral committal, I used the words from the Common Book of Prayer in 1662 adapted by a Geordie lady Mrs Percy Hassem in the 1950's & passed on to me by fellow Geordie & my close friend, pastor of 60 years, Val English, "from earth to heaven, from ashes to beauty, from dust to life' in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life". With these words our gaze & perspective shift from earth & death, to heaven & life. To be rooted in the resurrection is to be rooted in & have hope.

When taking a funeral I love proclaiming the comforting hope in Jesus' words in John 11:25, "*I am the resurrection & the Life. Whoever believes in me, though they die, yet shall they live, and whoever lives in me and believes in me shall never die*". Our resurrection hope is eternal, everlasting, BUT it is also for living now!

It provides potential for daily transformation that comes from obedience, right personal choices & often involves sacrifice. Phil 2:8 Christ "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!" It may be useful to spend a few minutes reflecting on your own life, and where you see growth, maturity, change or newness. Thank God for this new work in you & pray others will be positively influenced by your witness.

Lockdown never really worked around Easter



HE IS NOT HERE, HE HAS RISEN

Matthew 28:6



Starts today [www.springharvest.org/blog/full-spring-harvest-home-programme](http://www.springharvest.org/blog/full-spring-harvest-home-programme)

Praying that we all know God's resurrection power at work in our lives

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SICKY GUMBEL

WHAT DOES HE WANT TO TURNAROUND IN YOUR LIFE?

From Friday's Daily Telegraph

DO NOT EAT TOO MANY EASTER EGGS



Labradoodle Bruce rests on the way to the vets from its Hampshire home after eating a dozen Cadbury Creme Eggs and dark chocolate, which is poisonous to dogs. *The Daily Telegraph* Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April

**Sick as a dog**

2021

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