

Dear Friends,

In these post-Easter Sunday days and weeks we look to consider how we live out our Easter faith; seeking to ask ourselves – ‘What difference does the truth and hope of Jesus’ resurrection make to my life?’ and ‘How can I share that with others?’

If you like it’s the perpetual question that we should all take time to reflect on – ‘How then shall we live?’ (Using a phrase that those connected to the Northumbria Community have as a core part of their corporate ‘being’ and ‘doing’.) This is a question we should consider daily but it comes into sharp focus as we have just celebrated the most momentous event in Christian history – we say, and sing, and reflect on the gospel stories because this matters...and if it matters as much as we say it does, oughtn’t that to make a discernible difference in us and through us?

Monday of this week (25th April) is a day dedicated to Mark the Evangelist – author of the shortest but probably the earliest of the gospel accounts of Jesus’ earthly ministry. As Mark sets out to explain ‘the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (Mark 1:1) the gospel rapidly runs through the times of baptism, testing, calling, healing and teaching in Chapters 1-10 and then slows down the pace from Chapter 11 onwards as Jesus enters Jerusalem and makes his final preparations, for himself and those closest to him, for the cross and beyond.

The day of Resurrection in Mark is a short, sharp ending as most scholars accept that the gospel account ends at verse 8 of Chapter 16 – Mary Magdalene and the other women go to the tomb in the early morning, they find the tomb open and are told by some kind of angelic messenger, that Jesus isn’t there as he has been raised; they are charged with sharing this news with the disciples but we’re told, ‘They went out and ran from the tomb, distressed and terrified. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.’ (Mark 16:8)

But they must have told someone, mustn’t they?

They must have moved on from distress and fear to realisation and hope and then shared this with others as they were instructed...otherwise, how would we know?

I’m quite sure the gospel writer deliberately ends the text this way to make us think, enter into their ‘Good News’ story – maybe with questions, maybe with wonder but certainly because Mark wants us to engage with it, mull it over – the mystery of Jesus’ resurrection - what a difference it made to those first witnesses and how it came to be shared the world over.

Because if we do that, we might just have some inkling about how we share this news today.

God of hope and wonder;

open our eyes,

open our minds,

open our hearts,

to the mystery of your love in Jesus – living, dying and rising.

Grant us the inspiration, empowering and guiding of your Spirit,

in the people and places you call us to today. Amen.

Have a good week!

Sam.