

EASTER HOPE: NOT JUST WISHFUL THINKING BUT REALITY

Easter 12/4/20 Matthew 28: 1-10; 1 Corinthians 15: 3-8; 12-20. 1 Peter 1:3-5

Over the past 3 weeks, all over the country, colourful rainbows have appeared in windows of homes, as a symbol of hope and of support for NHS staff, carers and other key workers and in appreciation of their selfless commitment. Our spirits in this bleak time may have also been lifted by stories of very elderly people who have recovered; by warmer weather; by fresh colour and new life breaking through the ground; by groups and individuals reaching out to offer help and a listening ear to the isolated; and by the kindness of family and friends and strangers. I have personally been encouraged by phone calls, prayers and messages from near and far, though like many, I miss the touch and presence of people, especially those we love. Please do keep in touch with each other and look out for our neighbours also.

“Hope”: the first rainbow in Genesis is a symbol of God’s commitment to all life on earth. But for me, the truth of Easter is what gives me hope and an inner peace and joy, even in the darkest of times – **our “living hope”** (1 Peter chapter 1, verses 3-5). Jesus experienced abandonment, betrayal, pain, dread and desolation, culminating in the agony of crucifixion and in taking on Himself the full weight of the pain and evil of the world.

Because Jesus is risen, the ultimate hold of evil and death over all who trust in Him is now broken. Because death did not have the final say as God’s power raised Jesus to life, I know that Jesus is just who He said He is – God Himself - and that as result each of us can trust in our Lord’s promises and love.

Consider the evidence: the lack of any alternative explanation for the changes in the disciples – including on one occasion more than 500 men - when they then met the risen Christ for themselves and the inner strength and confidence they found; all that Jesus had said about himself; the massive stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb; the disappearance of His body and the inability of the authorities to find it; and the experience of all those since then – myself included - who have come to trust in God’s unfailing love in Jesus.

Pray to this Jesus that you would know His presence with you and the power of His love for you – and you will.

Jesus promised His followers: ***Because I live, you also will live. John 14: 19.***

God loves you. Believe it!

You are special to God. Believe it!

God’s got a plan for you. Believe it!

On the 3rd day, Jesus rose from the dead - Believe it!