



Sunday Reflection

Season of Easter

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 18 April 2021

Easter 3

Today the risen Lord Jesus appears to his disciples and shows them that he has risen from the tomb and is truly alive. He calls them to be witnesses of the good news that God forgives all who turn to God, repenting of their sins. Let us worship the Lord our God with faith, joy and thanksgiving..

Reflection for this week's Gospel

"You are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:48

An Illustration to set the scene

It seemed almost too good to be true. But it was true!

On his thirteenth birthday Jamie's parents told him that they were all going to Athens for six days during the Easter holidays.

Jamie was fascinated by ancient Greece and its people and he so wanted to see the ancient sites such as the Parthenon and the Temple of Zeus.

And now he was actually going. It seemed almost too good to be true!

Of course, by Easter last year the whole country was in lockdown because of the terrible coronavirus pandemic and the planned trip to Athens was cancelled.

It wasn't that Jamie's gift was too good to be true, it was just that the reality of our "normal" lives changed drastically and who could tell what the "new normal" would be?

Jamie, being quite a grown-up and philosophical thirteen-year-old, knew that the holiday in Athens would still happen some time.

Meanwhile, although disappointed, he still had a challenging Lego Star Wars kit to work on.

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

The followers of Jesus had hoped that he was the promised one, the Messiah, sent by God to redeem Israel. But he has been killed. It had all been too good to be true; their hopes were dashed, their dreams shattered. But now, impossibly, the tomb is empty, rumours of resurrection are in the air and hope is beginning to glimmer on a distant horizon.

Now Jesus is standing in front of them – or is he? Minds reeling and exhausted, they don't know what to think or believe. Then he speaks in his dear familiar voice: "Peace be with you... look at my hands and my feet... touch me... give me something to eat".

At last they know beyond doubt that, far from its being too good to be true, Jesus has risen from the dead and is truly alive again. This is their new and eternal reality.

The disciples were right in believing that Jesus is God's promised Messiah. That fact wasn't too good to be true. Their mistake lay in thinking that the Messiah would be a warrior king who would overthrow all enemies of Israel and establish his rule of peace and justice. Now Jesus opens their minds and hearts to understand that the redemption of all people lies in their repentance and God's forgiveness of their sins. This has always been God's promise revealed in scripture.

A group of people once paralysed by grief and fear are to become a dynamic group proclaiming to all people the good news of God's forgiveness of their sins through the redeeming love of God's Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

They are witnesses of this great truth and we, too, are called to be witnesses in our generation.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

So where are we today in our Gospel reading and where is God in our lives?

We might be with the dream-shattered disciples, filled with grief and possibly anger, because God hasn't been or done for us what we had expected. We should have known that it was all too good to be true.

Perhaps God is inviting us to move from that dark place, to allow our hearts and minds to be opened to new understanding about who Jesus is and how he longs to draw us close to himself.

Maybe step by step we are being shown that God's love, compassion and forgiveness are real – they are not too good to be true.

We may already have a deep understanding of how God has been active in our lives. Perhaps God has brought us gently through a valley of shadows – a serious illness of mind or body, a devastating bereavement and grief that overwhelmed us, or a troubled relationship. Whatever it was that so wounded us, we can say now that God has healed us in ways we can trust.

And now we are called to be witnesses of the living God: loving Father, redeeming Son and empowering Spirit. We are called to tell our stories, our Gospel, and to reach out to those around us who need our witness of that Good News in their lives

"You are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:48

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk