

5.4.26 am Easter Sunday Morning

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Date: 05 April 2026

Preacher: Dr Antony Latham

[0:00] Well, a happy Easter to all of you here. It's lovely to be here with you. Warm welcome to our service this morning. Cresce provision continues as usual during the service, with Sunday school running for primary age children. Visiting children are very welcome and can join with the youngsters as they go out after the second singing.

There will be an informal prayer meeting tonight before the evening service at 5.30pm in the prayer meeting room. All these are clean up on, I won't give all of the many intimations, but I'll just highlight a few of them.

The evening service tonight will be taken by Chris, that's Kiki McRae. The community lunch was very well attended last Monday. £293.73 was raised for Tarbert in Bloom.

Important message, would members of the congregation please be careful not to park the cars on or prevent access to the electric charging points, which are highlighted in green in front of the Harris garage.

The Ladies' Fellowship meets Mondays 8pm. Little Fishers on Tuesday, Road to Recovery, Tuesday 7pm. Scripture Union will be back in East Scott after the Easter holidays.

[1:47] And the prayer meeting will be held in person and on Zoom this Wednesday at 7.30pm. Friday Clubs for Young People will be back after the Easter holidays. And both services next Sunday will, please God, be taken by the minister who is away at the moment, as we know, on his break, David MacLeod.

So, we're going to join in worship, singing from Psalm 118, the beginning of the psalm. A time to rejoice and to praise the Lord on this Easter day.

So, I'll just read the first verse. O praise the Lord, for he is good. His mercy lasteth forever. Let those of Israel now say, His mercy faileth never.

So, let's sing this to God's praise. O praise the Lord, for he is good.

His mercy lasteth forever. Let those of Israel now sing, His mercy faileth never.

[3:17] Let those of Israel now sing, His mercy faileth never.

I hear this test call on the Lord.

The Lord did answer me. He in a harsh way, He said, From God above Him He believed.

The mighty Lord is on my side. I will not be afraid.

For anything that man can do, I shall not be His way.

[4:54] The Lord doth take my heart with them. The Lord doth take my heart with them.

That help to suffer me. Therefore, God knows not to be it.

I might, His eyes shall see. Better it is to trust in God than trust in man's defense.

Better it is to trust in God than make. This is our confidence.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's just come before the Lord and bow our heads in prayer.

[6:12] Amen. Lord, we just praise you for this Easter morning. We thank you that this is the time we remember that you victoriously rose from the dead on the third day, that you are alive, that you are with us now by your Spirit.

We thank you, Lord, that we can pray to a living Savior. We praise you, Lord, for this. We thank you for what you've been through, as we remember the Friday when you were on the cross, going through hell for us, taking our sins upon yourself.

And it's only because you've taken our sins upon yourself that we are able to come into the Holy of Holies now and be with you.

And this is available to all of us. Thank you that it's free. We don't have to come up to some immense mark of morality in our own lives because we know that we cannot do that.

We know that it is free. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom, and we can enter in. And you said it is, you shouted out, it is finished.

[7:42] The work is done once and for all on the cross for us. But you are risen, and we just praise you for that, Lord, that we, on this Easter morning, can come together. We pray that each person here, in their different ways, will be able to experience your presence, your living presence, in a special way this morning.

We pray for all the churches in Tarbert, the different denominations. We pray for them. We pray for their congregations and their ministers. We pray for the worldwide church as we come together to worship you and to praise you and to rejoice with joy that you are alive.

We pray for those who are online and not able to be here today. We ask you, Lord, to be with them in a special way. We pray for the sick, those who are on beds of sickness.

We pray that you'll be especially close to them. We pray for all those who are struggling in different ways, through depression or grief or addiction, whatever it might be.

We ask you, Lord, on this Easter day, that they will have a special understanding that you are with them and that you'll never leave them. We pray for all those who doubt the resurrection, those who are confused, like those who we're going to look at on the road to Emmaus later on in this service.

[9:17] Thank you, Lord, that you are with them too and that you help them. And we pray that they will seek you with all their hearts and find you. We pray for David and Mary on their holiday break.

We pray that it will be a really blessed time for them, a time of rest and recuperation. And as we look out on our world, we are very sad as we see such conflict and the result of evil, the way that seems out of control.

we pray for all those who are suffering through this in different countries, in different ways, on our news screens, often not on our news screens.

Pray for those who are Christians in countries that cannot worship openly, who are suffering. And Lord, we ask that you give us confidence as we know you are overall, in the end, sovereignly in control.

And we pray for your kingdom in this world. We pray for your kingdom to your will, your presence.

[10:37] presence. That will be done in our troubled world. So as we continue with this service, Lord, we pray for your spirit to be with us.

We pray for your guidance and your help in all that we do. In the name of Jesus. Amen. So, boys and girls, would you like to come up to the front?

Good to see you. That's great. We've got some, some new visitors, which is lovely to see as well.

So, how are you this morning? Yeah, you're doing well. You having a good Easter? Yeah. Oh, that's great. I'm going to sit on this chair. I'm far too tall here.

So, what's special about Easter? When Jesus died on the cross. Okay. Jesus died on the cross.

[11:40] Yes. Anybody else? What happened on the Sunday after that? Yes. He rose. He rose from the dead. Exactly. So, that's why we have Easter.

And we're really very happy about that. So, Jesus rose from the dead. Now, what happened, do you think, to his body after he'd come down from the cross?

It was a terrible time on the cross, and he died there for us. Do you know what happened to his body? Yes? Yes? I'm not sure what your name is, but I'll just go ahead.

Did they put him in a tomb? They put him in a tomb. Can anyone tell me what a tomb is? What's a tomb? Yes? It's like a cave. It's like a cave.

Yes, you've got all the answers. Yeah. Yeah. So, a tomb, and we're going to actually see a photograph of a tomb in a minute. In those days, sometimes they carved out a big cave into the rock, which is like a room inside.

[12:51] It's like a cave. And they put this huge, big stone in front of it. And that's what happened with Jesus. Some friends of his came and took his body, and they put his body into this cave, into a tomb.

And this very, very heavy stone was put in front of it. Now, who's had an Easter egg? Or eggs? Lots of them. Yes, I think you've all had them.

Well, I've got one here, actually. There we are. Easter egg. Now, it's quite hard, isn't it?

Give it a wee knock there. Yeah. Yeah. He's trying to break it open. It's quite hard. Now, you might wonder, why do we have Easter eggs?

Are they just because we like having chocolate? No. There's lots of different reasons. And I think one of the reasons is that in the old days, they used to have an egg.

[13:57] And an egg is hard on the outside. And if you break into it, it's a little bit like when the tomb that we've just talked about was broken open.

And Jesus was alive and came out. So I'm just going to break this egg now. My... There he goes. It's quite hard to do that. I'm going to put this aside, and I'll give it to one of your teachers, so if they're nice to you, they'll give some to you later.

But I'm going to show you a picture now. Can everybody see that? That's just like the tomb that Jesus' body was put into.

And you see that huge stone that actually is rolled away there. And we can see the next one. And this is a picture of some of his...

The people who loved him, and they were women, some of the ladies, came because they just wanted to be near him. They were very, very sad, and they wanted to come to him even though he was in this tomb.

[15:03] But when they came, they found that the stone had been rolled away. You can see that. And they don't know what's happened. Why is the stone rolled away?

You can have the next one. This is a picture what it would have looked like inside that tomb. The body of Jesus would have been just there on the right-hand side.

But there's no Jesus. Just some cloths lying there. We read about this in the Bible. They were amazed. And actually, there was an angel there as well who pushed away that stone and spoke to them and said, that he's risen just as he said he would.

Because he said he would rise from the dead. And he was seen and was with his followers for weeks, about seven weeks after that.

We read all about that in the Bible. So try and do that. Maybe later today, read about when they came to the tomb and they were shocked and the stone had been rolled away and he wasn't there because Jesus is alive.

[16:09] And because he's alive, we have a living Savior. We can talk to him. We can pray to him. And we can put our trust in him. So next time, you break into the egg, think of the tomb being broken open and Jesus alive.

So we just close our eyes in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this Easter time. Thank you for this reminder, even when we have these nice eggs, that the tomb was broken open and Jesus came out alive and he's with us now.

Bless each one of us, these young ones and all of us older ones, that we may know this living Jesus in our lives. We ask it in his name. Amen. So now we're going to sing from Mission Praise number 52, God sent his son.

So Mission Praise number 52, God sent his son. They called him Jesus. He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy our pardon.

An empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives. Let's sing this to God's glory. God sent his son.

[17:33] Let's sing this to God.! Let's sing this to God.! Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. So let's turn to our Bibles and we're going to look at the Gospel of Luke chapter 24.

[21:02] The Gospel of Luke chapter 24 beginning at verse 1. Luke chapter 24 verse 1. I'm going to read to verse 35.

But on the first day of the week at early dawn they went to the tomb taking the spices they had prepared and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they went in they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this behold two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground the men said to them why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here but has risen. Remember how he had told you while he was still in Galilee. That the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise. [22:06] And they remembered his words and they remembered his words and returned from the tomb. They told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles.

But these words seemed to them an idle tale and they didn't believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb stooping and looking in. He saw the linen cloths by themselves and he went home marvelling at what had happened.

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognising them. And he said to them what is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?

And they stood still looking sad. And one of them named Cleopas answered him. Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem that doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?

[23:21] And he said to them what things? And they said to him concerning Jesus of Nazareth. A man who is a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes and besides all this it is now the third day since these things happened.

Moreover some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. And when they didn't find his body they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But him they did not see. And he said to them oh foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

[24:33] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if they were going further. But they urged him strongly saying stay with us for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.

So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road. While he opened to us the scriptures.

And they arose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together saying the Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon.

Then they told what had happened to them on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. This is the word called the Lord.

[25:37] We are now going to sing in Gaelic. We will remain seated. And we are going to sing from Psalm 30 verses 1 to 3.

Let us read the beginning of Psalm 30 in English. Let us read the ending of Psalm 30 in a Jude. Let us read the ending of Psalm 30 in a Jude. Let us read the ending of Psalm 30 in a Jude. Let us read the ending of Psalm 30 in a Jude. Let us read the ending of Psalm 30 in a Jude. Let us read the

And they remembered his words and returning from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles.

But these words seemed to them an idle tale and they didn't believe them. Often when women say things, give some testimony, they're seen by men as an idle tale and especially in those days.

And we'll talk a bit more about that later. They thought it was an idle tale from these ladies. They didn't believe it. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb, stooping and looking in.

He saw the linen cloths by themselves and he went home marveling at what had happened. The distance that they were walking was about the same as from Tarbert to where we live in Lachali on the bay.

[33:18] It's about seven miles. So it probably would have taken about two and a half hours, something like that, to walk along to this village. Emmaus was west of Jerusalem and they would have been walking into the setting sun.

One of them, we read in verse 18, was named Cleopas. We don't have any other information about him. His companion may have been male or female, according to the Greek.

It was possibly his wife. They'd come from Jerusalem and they were clearly in touch with and very close to the 11 disciples. Verse 13 says that they were two of them, i.e. part of the disciple group.

And in verse 22, we read some of the women of our company amazed us. And so they personally knew those women we read of in the first verses of the chapter.

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James and others. And they'd been told that very morning by them about the amazing discovery of the empty tomb and the angels.

[34:27] And it seems likely that these two had been followers and very close to Jesus. They were absolutely traumatized by the events of Friday.

They might have been even at the cross and seen this horrific event occurring to the one that they loved and had hoped would be their savior.

They were confused and troubled about what it all meant. And they were in grief. They didn't understand. And so it was women who first found the tomb empty.

Now, it's worth thinking about this. Why is this an extraordinary fact to have been written into the Gospels? That it was women who were written as the first witnesses of this resurrection.

Now, in those days, women had absolutely no status as witnesses and were considered unreliable in giving evidence. And we read that.

[35:28] They thought it was an idle tale. For the Gospel writers to state that it was women who were the first witnesses of the resurrection really shows us how true this account is.

No one would make this up and put women as the first bearers of this incredible news that he has risen. And those who doubt that the resurrection, and many do, the resurrection of Jesus, should think hard about this.

Here they were, these two, walking along the road, and a stranger comes alongside them. And we know that this was Jesus himself, but we read in verse 16, their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And there's mystery here, but this indicates that at that moment they could not spiritually discern who he was, even though he is beside them.

They were not given the ability to recognize him. Here they were with Jesus beside them and they knew him not. Their poignant and sad words in verse 21 are echoed in all those who long for him but have not recognized him.

[36:45] Maybe there are some here today. We read, we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Now, there are seven very short points.

First point, Jesus is with us even when we do not realize it. These two disciples didn't recognize Jesus. When he came alongside them, we read in verse 16, as I mentioned already, their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And we don't know if this is because Jesus in his resurrection body looked different or whether, as is suggested in the text, God made them somehow unable to recognize him.

Mary Magdalene had the same experience, didn't she, when she met Jesus in the garden near the tomb. But how often do we go through our lives and not recognize Jesus?

We can be so busy, so self-absorbed. We can stop reading the Bible or knowing him through his word. We can reduce our praying.

[37:55] Things happen in our lives which distract us. And often it's only as the last resort that we turn to him for help. Yet, remember those words that Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 28, I am with you always to the end of the age.

I'm with you always. The fact is that we often fail to look for him right there with us all the time. I speak to myself of course.

Sometimes it's because we're caught up in illness or bereavement or some form of crisis. Our minds are filled with the problem and it's hard to feel his presence.

When I was very ill and in pain in 2021, I was admitted to hospital. I had emergency surgery. It was very hard at that moment to recognize Jesus with me in the midst of it all.

Later, I realized of course he was with me and he brought me through that crisis. And of course during that time people were praying for me. He was with me. Now, these two disciples were also in a crisis.

[39:09] Their beloved master had been crucified and perhaps it was because they were so anxious and depressed about this, that they failed to look properly. How like us.

We need to trust that our feelings are not a good guide to knowing his presence sometimes. There's nothing wrong with feelings but sometimes they're not trustworthy.

As Christians, we know by faith and by his promises in the Bible that he never leaves us. there's that well-known illustration of this called footprints in the sand.

Someone has a dream that they're walking alongside Jesus on a beach but at times of difficulty there's only one set of footprints. Only later does he realize that this was when Jesus was carrying him though he didn't know it at the time.

And this reminds us of Psalm 55 verse 22 which says cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you. He will never permit the righteous to be moved.

[40:16] It's a wonderful promise there. So do you or I sometimes feel that God has left you or is uninterested in you? Do you recognize him in your life?

He says I'm with you always. And this account of the two disciples not knowing it was Jesus should encourage us to simply trust. And I think the lesson for us here is to pray and act and live always with the conscious trusting knowledge that he is with us whatever the circumstances.

Second point Jesus cares about our worries and our doubts. Now these two disciples were distraught. Their minds were filled with worries a sense of loss confusion anxiety.

They loved the Lord. They loved him. Now look at what had happened to him. They'd heard stories about the women at the tomb finding an empty grave but the penny hadn't dropped.

They were struggling with their faith and their sense of great disappointment. How often we too go through life facing all sorts of trouble and wondering is he there for us?

[41:35] We begin to lose touch with him and Satan buffets us with doubts. Jesus came alongside them while they were in this state and he took time with them.

He cared so much about their confusion and their anxiety. He spent considerable time maybe could have been about two hours for all we know going through the scriptures with them to show them the truth about himself.

Jesus never abandons the struggling soul and if you're struggling or if I'm struggling a bit like those two don't think he doesn't care.

He's there to help you. Are you like them wondering if he really is the Christ the risen Lord? Are you like them wondering if it's just been all a story with little reality?

I'm reminded of the wonderful verse in Matthew 11 28. Come to me all you who are labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

[42:41] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and lowly in heart. We need to bring our doubts actively to him.

Get into his word, read the gospels, pray for him to reveal himself by his spirit. Just like with these two, he will do just that for the seeking heart.

Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. He doesn't give up on you. He cares and is closer than you can ever imagine.

And so he's with us when we don't realise it. Second point, he cares for us in all our worries and doubts. third, scripture is all about Jesus. Jesus knew that these two followers had not understood the scriptures.

We read in verse 25, Oh, he said these words to them, Oh, foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

[43:45] Was it not necessary that the Christ suffer these things and enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

how we would have liked to have eavesdropped on that Bible teaching. After he had gone, they said to themselves, verse 32, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road and while he opened up the scriptures?

And of course, the Old Testament is full of references to the coming of Jesus. George's sermon last week on Proverbs chapter 9 is one good example of that.

And when someone asks me about this, I may point them to, especially to Isaiah 53. There we have a complete description, an accurate description, of Jesus and his work for us on the cross, astonishingly written hundreds of years before that.

I am certain that Jesus quoted this passage to this troubled pair. worth reading a bit of that part of Isaiah which says, Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.

[45:11] But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Which is why it's so good for us to spend quality time each day in the scriptures, reading chunks regularly. There's no substitute to immersing ourselves in the word of God.

this is how he usually speaks to us. Do we want to experience the same as those disciples, having our heart burn within us? This is how Jesus still speaks to us today, through his word.

And so, look at these points, he's with us when we don't realize it, he cares for us in our worries and doubts, scripture is all about him, fourth point, they were slow to believe.

[46:17] They poured out their concerns to him, their grief, their anxiety, before he helps them go through the scriptures. He admonishes them, reading verse 25 again, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer all these things and enter into his glory? And this statement applies to us as well. Are we slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken about Jesus?

He doesn't mince his words here. We may be good church goers, but are we also slow of heart to believe?

If we really lived out this sort of faith he's looking for, would we not be much more effective Christians, full of zeal? And so he's challenging you and me, are we being foolish?

Are we also slow of heart to believe? I think these words can be a wake-up call to us to take all that we know about Jesus more seriously and more faithfully.

[47:26] Fifth point, we must invite him in. We read from verse 28 that as they drew near to the village, he acted as if he were going further away.

This is really interesting. There is a reason it's there. Jesus doesn't force himself on anybody. He acted as if he was going further.

Read verse 39. But they urged him strongly, saying, stay with us, for it's toward evening, and the day is now far spent.

They could have let him go, and then never have understood who he was. But they strongly urged him to stay with them. That's a great example for us.

We have a choice. Do we let the passing Jesus pass on, or do we invite him in? All of us have that choice.

[48:26] We must, like those two, strongly urge him to stay in our lives, to come in. We're reminded of that lovely verse in Revelation, where Jesus speaks to Christians, and I believe also to non-Christians.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door, I'll come in and eat with him, and he with me. Sixth point, faith brings recognition and joy.

So we've seen that they've come near the village, which is their destination, and Jesus makes as if he's going on further, but they urge him strongly to stay with them. It was now evening and darkness was approaching.

He agreed to come in with them. Now, when he agreed to come in and stay a while with them, presumably in their home, he sat at a meal with these two. We read in verse 30 that it was somehow when he took the bread, broke it, blessed it, and gave it to them, that they recognized him.

We don't read that it was when they saw the nail marks of the crucifixion, though that's possible. Rather, it seems to have been a reminder of how he had done this before.

[49:43] Certainly, we read the same about him blessing the bread at the feeding of the 5,000, and of course, at the Last Supper. There are moments in our life when our eyes are opened.

It might be at our conversion, sometimes when we read a scripture, scripture, or we hear a teaching, hear his voice in nature, something reminds us of who he is.

It might be a verse, it might be a vision, it may be when we're praying for his presence, it might be an encouragement from a friend, when we're struggling, we should ask for this recognition.

It is supernatural. It's a work of the Holy Spirit. Remember these two in verse 16 had their eyes kept from recognizing him.

They needed a prompt to give them faith. In this case, the way he took and blessed the bread and they had their eyes opened. For myself, it was many years ago in Kenya when I first came to recognize Jesus.

[50:53] It was a spiritual revelation when I was reading the Bible to my astonishment. It was as if Jesus was there and honestly like those two disciples, my heart at that time was burning within me.

John Wesley, the famous preacher, had a similar experience. You might say his Emmaus road in May 24th, 1738 in London and he wrote about this in his journal which I'll read a little bit of.

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

And we all know that John Wesley became one of the most powerful evangelists and preachers that we've ever known. We all have different experiences, but at least we can say that we should have this inner recognition of Jesus.

[52:15] He is alive, he is indeed with us, he's for us, he's done all that's needed for us on the cross. Our sins can be forgiven and we can be free.

Seventh and last point, when we see Jesus we want to tell others. This recognition changed everything for these two disciples.

Jesus disappeared from sight, but they didn't just sit there wondering. We know it was probably night then, for in verse 28 it says it's toward evening when they arrived at their house.

But they were transformed by this encounter. And the same can happen to us when we recognize him in our lives. That same hour, we read in verse 33, they returned back to Jerusalem, back along seven miles in the dark.

Not an easy thing to do and possibly actually dangerous in the dark, but they were determined. They couldn't keep this news to themselves. They found the eleven disciples and told them.

[53:26] And we read that the eleven confirmed to them, the Lord has risen indeed and had appeared to Simon. So, on this Easter, let's join with them in the excitement of that moment.

