

Easter Day talk

A very happy and joy filled Easter day to you all

Christ is risen...hallelujah...God be praised

Isaiah proclaims...

Surely this is our God; we trusted in him and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.

We have every reason to rejoice...Even in the face of current hardships and unwelcome change

From the beginning we know that God has the will and power to turn...chaos to creation

To turn empty darkness into eternal light...To take isolation and to bring forth love

He has the power...To defeat the forces of death and to bring forth life...And life in all of its glorious fullness

He is the Life Bringer...

God does this by his powerful word...He speaks and the impossible becomes possible

He has the authority to call into existence the things that do not exist...as it says in Paul's letter to the Romans...

"The God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were"

This is the one true living God...

And we know that it is in Jesus the risen Christ...that God...the Bringer of Life...has made himself known

So Rejoice...Sing Hallelujahs

Dear friends...

We stand together this Easter Morning in our hearts...although this fearful disease has forced us apart

We stand together before the stone that has been rolled away...

Before the empty tomb of Jesus of Nazareth

This is the deepest truth of our lives

We know that new life has been given to a world full of fear and sadness

Christ is risen and...And by God's grace we have been raised with him...

Trust me when I say to you that you are a new people...called to live as light and love in the world around you...

The events of Good Friday were the last desperate attempts of death...to defeat Jesus

Death...that was embodied in the structures of power around Jesus...In the powers of state and religion...

...The power of the liar

Death had its moment...in darkness and earthquake

At the 6th hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour...as Mark writes

But friends... Despite how it appeared...death did not have its way

Death was defeated

Its servants were going to be deeply disappointed

On the mountain of Crucifixion Jesus defeated death...He brought death to death itself...

Paul writes...

Death has been swallowed up in victory

Where O death is your victory, where O death is your sting?

And we know this is true...

Because God the bringer of all life...God the creator...God the very breath of life...

...raised Jesus from the grip of the grave

And in him began his new creation

A new first day

The sovereign Lord...as Isaiah writes...will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth.

In the risen Jesus we came to know that the power of death and despair is not our conqueror

There is ONE who is stronger

Jesus is for us the very presence of...The Life Bringer...

...in the midst of a world that so often offers only death

In the resurrection we see this so clearly

But of course it's not only in Jesus' resurrection that we recognise this truth

The pattern is there from the beginning

If we look carefully we will see that everything Jesus does is shaped...

...by the victory of life over death

Watch as he restores Lepers...who were as good as dead to the world...

How he brings them to a new hope filled life

See how he brings the demon-possessed man out of the tombs...Breaks the deathly chains of isolation and despair...

...and returns him to his home

See how he rejuvenates the spine of a crippled woman...gives sight to dead eyes...restores withered hands...

Listen as he tells the story of a lost son...who is reunited to his father

The one who was dead and who is now alive

Jesus...The Word of God... gives life over and over again

And not only does he give the gift of life...

...he redefines life... in terms of our relationship with God...and our relationships with our brothers and sisters...Our neighbours

By the power of God...Jesus inverts all of our definitions

So that what the world thought was the way of death...is truly the gift of life

A seed that goes into the ground and dies to bring forth new life

And what the world calls life...he shows to be a deathly existence

A world of exploitation, exclusion and fear is exposed by the light the light of Christ

Jesus tells us the truth of life and death

He is the way...of life...

The truth...of life

He is the life itself

In Luke's Gospel he tells us what God's new life looks like...when it comes

"The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them."

Jesus is the life bringer. He is the freedom giver

He is the exile ender and the home bringer

We know because we are truly Easter people

We know he gave freedom to the enslaved...to those locked in hopelessness and possession

We know he ended exile for those who were locked out of life...the Lepers and the unclean

And we know that he brought life....

Both in the moment that we celebrate today

And also in the way he lived amongst us

The way are called to live Church...as life bringers

Dear friends, if we think carefully we realise that...

The church is made up of those who were once dead and are now alive

It is made up of those who were once excluded and are now restored

It is made up of those who were lame but who now dance

Those who were once lost in death but are now forgiven

We are alive in Christ...The risen one

That is the free gift of God...Mercy and grace flowing like a never ending stream

And now dear church...we are entrusted with the vocation of life giving

Of proclaiming this Easter truth...of death and resurrection

The risen Christ calls us to live...as risen people...in him

It is sadly true that this world finds resurrection unlikely and untrue

Just Like the disciples when they first heard the news of the risen Christ

But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense

This fearful world cannot understand the power of God...It is nonsense to them

Or indeed recognise that this world...is truly his

The world has been led to believe something less than the wonderful truth

The news is just too good to be true

But we know...And we find our lives in the risen one

We have died to our former selves and we have been raised with him...

To speak in a new way

To sing his new song...Especially perhaps in these difficult days of isolation and fear

To know and value each other with new energy

To be wise and to act in new bold ways for hope and justice

To be truth seekers and hope givers

To know and share the ways of God's good news in all of the ways that make for life in all its fullness

You might ask how we truly know when we have passed from death to life?...In to the life of Christ

Paul tells us that there is one true sign...

There is one true test... And it is love

He writes...

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

Or as it says in the Message...

The way we know we've been transferred from death to life is that we love our brothers and sisters. Anyone who doesn't love is as good as dead.

It was the power of love that raised Jesus from the dead...

It is the same power of love that lives in you

The same power of love that pours out from the people of the Way of Jesus...

...Like living water...like the light of a new day

Jesus came to bring us life...The life of the Life Giver...

We are children of Easter...of the resurrection of our Lord

And this matters not just for us but for the whole world

It is the free gift of God...that we are given this world and each other to love

I have no doubt that it will be love...that will carry us through these times

That it is love that will bind our wounds

That it is love that will unify us even in our separation

That it is love that offers a new beginning and new hope for all people

If only we would grasp it

It is our joyous task dear friends... to love others in ways that heal and transform

It is our joyous task to proclaim the resurrection and offer hope and new life for the whole world

A world so in need of the hope that you hold in your hearts

Rejoice...Christ is risen...Hallelujah

And...We join with all of God's joy filled people as we say...Amen