

Mark 16:1-8. Easter Sunday.  
Also 1 Cor 15:1-11.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**All He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Reflections upon the different 4 parts. The Women. The Angel. Jesus. Peter.

The Women. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome.

To spend a few minutes on these important ladies. After all the focus on the apostles, we notice how they are absent from the cross, bar John, and we do not see them again until the end of Easter Day.

These honoured women are mentioned in different ways. Three women who watched Jesus as he was crucified, saw where he was buried, and experienced the resurrection. Can you imagine the rollercoaster of emotions they must have gone through over those days – we can many of us remember times of stress, strain and how it all worked out. We came into Holy Week already knowing the final chapter. I remember reading about a person blogging, who said they always read the end of the book first so it helped them with the journey through the book to know it would all be okay in the end...

These women. They didn't expect it. It wasn't just the men who didn't. The women – who had followed Jesus from Galilee didn't. Angel said in Luke: He is not here. He has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful people, be crucified and on the third day be raised again."

But it can become a little confusing as to who is who. Mary Magdalene, a lady whose life was turned around – 7 demons had been cast out of her. What had her life been, to allow such strong demonic possession. Yet Jesus delivered her.

Mary the mother of James . She is also called, in the previous chapter, Mary the Mother of James the Younger and James. So who is James younger – what does that relate to? When Jesus chose the 12 apostles, there was James son of Zebedee. And there was James son of Alphaeus. Likely the title 'James the Younger', was known in the church community, to distinguish from James, the brother of John the Gospel writer. Mary was a mother of an original apostle.

But the same lady is called in John – wife of Clopas. The nearest version of Clopas is Cleopas. It is quite possible that the person who walks on the road to Emmaus, is the husband of the woman, Mary. James the apostle – James son of Alphaeus. It is suggested that taking the original Aramaic name – the versions it could reasonably

be translated into in the Greek, could render Alphaeus or Clopas... Suggesting. Mary and Cleopas were parents of one of the apostles...

It means incredibly. It would mean that the first man – quite possibly - to see the risen Lord – was the husband of a woman who had stood by the cross, who watched at his burial, who came early to the tomb and who herself had seen the risen Lord. Ha. Can you imagine the family stories that weekend – in the years to come! James – all he saw the Lord do in ministry, his mother, her experiences over those days; her father, a smile in his eyes saying, how he had no clue the young man in his 30s chatting to them on the road to Emmaus was the Lord!

Salome. She is called in Matthew, mother of the sons of Zebedee. John calls her Jesus mother's sister. Salome – Mrs Zebedee – mother of the sons of thunder – James and John. And a sister to Mary, Jesus mother.

All 3 women were there at the cross. Mary and Mary M were at the tomb to see the burial. Where is Salome? Well, at the cross Jesus entrusts his mother to John's keeping. So, to her nephew. John takes her to his home. John has a home in the city. Though his work was mostly as a fishermen in Galilee. It is possible that as John took Mary to that home, Salome – her sister may have gone with them as she disappears from the burial

story. Perhaps to allow John to return to the last hours of Jesus on the cross, memories he would record.

Such a range of lives. Yet united in Jesus. Different backgrounds. Different wealth. Different ages (Mary M young adult, Salome and Mary parents of grown up children). One – dramatically changed. Perhaps from a questionable background to have allowed demonic possession. Another – Salome - who had known Jesus all his life – yet saw he was more than just carpenter. Saw that he was not delusional. There was something about his teachings, the way he pointed to himself, his authority to teach, over demons, over sickness, over death even to forgive sins... he was . She beyond what maybe everyone else thought. He is just the carpenter. Mary. Jesus came into their lives and the whole family was turned around. Husband. Wife. Sons.

***How have you come to follow Jesus?*** Was it dramatic, like Mary? Did you grow up knowing about Jesus from your youth – like Salome - and then at some point, you saw something more, he was more than a symbol, more than a historical man who lived in Israel and had an amazing birth. Did Jesus break into your life and your families and it all got turned upside down – like Mary wife of Clopas?

**Their devotion.** They desire to complete the burial process. They have purchased spices, after the shops reopened after Sabbath. They had seen where he was

buried. Spices have already been used. But it is possible they knew that the burial had been quickly done – so they were planned to return to complete the task. Luke says the women saw not only where he was laid but how it was done. They saw how Joseph and Nicomedus did it. They noticed he used 33 kilograms used – lavish even for a King – for he was a King.

Devotion. They want to do what they can now. They may have been grieving as the apostles, yet they buy – and they go. They go, as soon as they can. They go as soon as darkness is fading, going in a group for security.

How do you show your devotion to Jesus? What examples could you write down? Or what could you tell your children or godchildren or grandchildren?

The whole world is told about Salome, Mary and Mary. They longed to do that they could. It cost them – financially. But also in energy. But they wanted to get in that tomb. How shall we do it? Didn't want anything to stop them.

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### ANGEL.

Jesus life and ministry has loads of angels doesn't it. An Angel speaks to Mary about his conception. And now an Angel speaks saying Mary's son is risen.

Angels erupted in the sky over Bethlehem and sang God's praises. Angel had strengthened him after his temptations in the wilderness. An Angel appeared to him to strengthen him as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus said he could have called 12 legions of angels to his side if he had wanted when he was arrested. Angels announced the incarnation., they announced the birth – Glory to Glory in the Highest and peace to men on whom his favour rests.”

How will that peace come? How will glory come to God? Through the cross and tomb. Today we join the angels in glorifying God.

Jesus said – it is in John 12 - when he knew the hour had come, in Jerusalem: Now my heart is troubled and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour. No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father glorify your name.” The cross brings glory to God from within us. We see the empty tomb. We know the work of the cross has been completed.

The gospel 1 Corinthians says:

- The gospel which we receive.
- The gospel on which we take our stand
- The Gospel by which we are saved
- The gospel we hold fast to.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He was raised on the third day. He goes on to say: If Christ has not been raised your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. But – a wonderful But - Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!

Join with the angels in glorifying God. For the gospel. The resurrection proves you have peace with God through the crucified risen Lord.

They announced, they praised, they supported, and on the cross, watched, (for Jesus did not call them and they did not go) and now they announce the victory. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene. Who was crucified. He has risen. "

This announcement. It means the gospel you have received, it is a gospel you can take your stand on, the gospel you hold fast to, the gospel by which you are saved – peace with God, glory to him. You have peace with God, and we glorify him today.

Jesus. Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
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**JESUS! He is raised. How do we know?**

**So, what evidence do we have for this resurrection itself?**

1. **Body's Absence from the tomb.** Many reasons suggested why the tomb was empty. **First (a)** it has been said – well, he didn't really die on the cross, **he passed out**, then recovered in a cool tomb.

Well, if you have seen *Passion* by Mel Gibson, it shows what Romans did. They knew how to crucify someone. And a stone, we heard the women working out a plan, weighed 1 and a half tons – so how did a weak, badly wounded man get out of that.

**Second (b). Disciples stole the body. Before the women arrived.** And they began a rumour he was alive. Well, would they have done? They seem in the story devastated by what has happened. Also, think of what happened in their lives. Ian Walker, a scientist at Cambridge, became a Christian because he said he could not believe that the disciples would have been willing to be tortured and die for something that they would have known, if they'd taken the body, was not true.



**Others (c)** said, well the **authorities took the body** – yet, if they had, why not bring it out and prove what these disciples were saying was wrong? Once word started getting around – they were clearly concerned about it, as they had asked Pilate for a Roman guard.

**Robbers stole the body? (d).** Unlikely, very unlikely. We said Jesus body was absent, but the women and later the men went into the tomb they found, grave clothes. Yet they were the only valuable thing to take – to take the ointments placed within the clothes.

2.Second piece of evidence – then Jesus real presence with the believers after that Good Friday. Was it a Hallucination? Well, is it possible for a group hallucination – can even two people have the same hallucination? Jesus appeared on 11 different occasions and most were with other people present, including 500 people at one time. Can they all have the same hallucination?

3.The impact on the disciples themselves? Defeated by what had happened to Jesus. Then something changed them. that they were declaring in the city where Jesus had been killed, and even declaring to the same Jewish religious leaders who had done it, that He is alive. And from that point, the Church spread – so within 30 –40 years it was established in the capital of the Roman Empire. It is a story of a peaceful revolution with no parallel really in the history of the world.

4. [Christian experiences down through the years.](#) People of all races, backgrounds, classes, nationalities have the same experience of knowing and have a relationship with the risen Jesus Christ. Their lives have been changed.

For me, there are historians and people in history I admire, but I don't have a daily relationship with them. When I became a Christian it suddenly pulled things together in me, which still hang today, of purpose meaning to life, and I went to University expecting to find it in law, and instead I found someone else at University. I am not perfect. But in that time, since 1993, I have experienced the faithfulness, closeness, love, power, presence of Jesus to convince me he is really alive.

**Jesus.** Alleluia. Christ is risen.

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**Peter.**

But Peter. The angel says: go tell his disciples *and Peter*. Did the women know of Peter's denial? Does that tell them that Peter is to be included. Does it tell the other 10 disciples that Peter has not been rejected.

Peter, who probably has been staying in the city since his denials, probably at the home of John. The women will be able soon – in the next 10-15 minutes as it is not far away – to tell him. Does it tell Peter, that he too is

invited to come to Galilee to see the Lord? To be part of the flock again that Jesus as shepherd will lead? Remember the resurrection revokes death and destruction but also sin.

Peter is mentioned - to show that he will be fully restored, despite his breach of faith.

Jesus does not give up on his disciples, no matter how great their failure or how many their faults. Go tell his disciples *and Peter*.

Peter, who was the first disciple called. One who was chosen as an apostle to be with Jesus and to go out to preach and heal. The one who declared who Jesus truly was. The one who was invited with 2 others to see Jesus revealed in all his glory. The one who was invited to be with Jesus as he prayed on Maundy Thursday.

*And the one who denied him three times.*

Such a fall.

Today maybe some of you here need to hear that - *go tell and Peter* - that perhaps you have fallen. You had been doing so well. But it has gone wrong. Maybe you only know it, maybe many do. Jesus says - there is always restoration, he does not give up. He comes to rub out

our failures and not rub them in. Jesus invites you to rise, to come out of the tomb you are in, as he has rolled back the stone and says - let us start again. Maybe if this is you, this is a day to accept that invitation from Christ.

Four individuals.

Women

Angels

Jesus

Peter.

All remembered and shared with us, the most incredible event in all history...

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**Closing Prayer.**

God of glory,

by the raising of your Son

you have broken the chains of death and hell:

fill your Church with faith and hope;

for a new day has dawned

and the way to life stands open

in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.