

## Service Transcript

### Resurrection Sunday Celebration 2022

Welcome, notices, birthday box

**Introduction – the empty box.** The box is empty, or is it?

**Opening words** Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

*God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.*

Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

*The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

Come and see what the Lord has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

*He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.*

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."

*The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

**Song:** 551 Thine be the glory

**Short Prayer**

**Bible Reading** Matthew 28:1-10

*After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

*2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

*5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."*

*8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

**Declaration:** Love has no expiry date

**Song 2020** See what a morning

**Talk:** Don't be afraid, go and tell

#### FACES

You'll see that you've been given a sheet with two faces on it; happy and sad. We are going to take a few straw poll of our reactions as a congregation to the story we are looking at today and we'll do that as we go along.

#### FEAR OR FUN

There are certain things in life that we are afraid of and would give us a sad or grumpy face, and there's other things that make us smile. Let's try a few then. We'll call this, Fear or Fun.

A massive thinderstorm

Being in a small boat on a stormy sea

A day of persistent rain in summer

A day of persistent rain in summer after weeks of no rain and high humidity

Taking a walk on the prom when it's blowing a gale

A power cut plunges your house into darkness

No fuel available at the garage.

Trying to cycle along the High Road when lorries are on diversion off the A14

A nuclear war with Russia

Another outbreak of COVID with a new, more aggressive variant

Throughout history, the human race has experienced all sorts of hazardous situations: famine, drought, disease, earthquakes and so on. Many situations human beings cause themselves like war and public unrest. We started with Psalm 46 today and it showed that down the ages people have put their trust in God when times of trouble came.

#### VERSES

Here are two verses from that psalm:

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*

*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.*

I put in a picture of a tsunami as that seems to match well! It's natural to fear when faced with a hazard particularly if we are unsure of the outcome. Take the recent pandemic for example.

God's desire for us is that our reaction to fear should be a trust rooted in Him. Let me give you a couple more VERSES:

*He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;*

*I will be exalted among the nations,*

*I will be exalted in the earth."*

*The Lord Almighty is with us;*

*the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

Can we say words like that about our trust in God? Is He really that powerful that we can rely on Him as our fortress? They are words that can come easily off our lips – but what was our reaction when faced with Covid-19?

We look forward to that day when God will sweep away all those things in our world which bring fear. Which brings us to the empty tomb.

Before we are hard on ourselves about not being very good with our fear and disbelief, the disciples didn't fare much better either!

What was the expectation of the women coming to the tomb? To see it shut; the stone rolled across. They knew stories of God raising people from the dead in the OT. They had witnessed Jesus raising people from the dead – the last one barely a week past. He even said He would be raised from death – but that morning they had no expectation of those words coming true. Let's take ourselves back to that garden tomb.

TERROR AT DAWN!

*There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

Let's take up our faces again. The first people we encounter are the soldiers. How do you think they felt? (Terrified) Then came the women and found the tomb empty. How were they feeling as they walked to the tomb? (Sad, grieving) Then they met the angel. (Terrified, worried – where was the body?) How do you think they felt after they heard what he had to say? (Joy) And the disciples when Jesus appeared to them? (They worshipped Him).

They weren't expecting Jesus to be resurrected – but they should have. They should have arrived expectantly. Yet they came in unbelief. It's a lesson to every Christian. We can repeat a lot of noble words from the Bible. Do we believe them? Our actions and our faces usually speak for us. Yet The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Are we relying on that fact today; right here, right now.

Let's look at what the angel said to the women as they took in the shock of finding an empty tomb:  
DON'T BE AFRAID

In our world, people generally have a different perspective to Christians. They may feel fear when faced with the whole idea of God. It's most noticeable as they ponder death. Is there a God?

What's He going to do to me because I haven't believed all these years?

The angel didn't judge the women for their unbelief – he just pointed them to the obvious.

HE ISN'T HERE – HE'S RISEN!

It must have been a wow! moment for the women. They came to grieve and left with joy as they realised what Jesus said was true.

If you are one of those people who worry what God is going to you when you encounter Him then think on this Jesus has risen. God is encountering you now and His message is not to judge you right now, but to offer you forgiveness, a relationship with Him, hope for the future. Jesus did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world may be saved through Him – that's why He died on the cross. God does not want you to live in fear, or sadness or worry – but to trust Him because Jesus died to deal with your sin and is now risen as proof that this has been done for you. All you have to do is believe. Will you do that today?

If you are a Christian and realise that you haven't really been putting your trust in Him recently, then this is a wake-up call for you. He is risen. Trust Him, follow Him afresh!

GO AND TELL

The final thing the angel said was to go and tell the others that Jesus is alive. And because the disciples back in the city had been forewarned by the women - there was no surprise, just joy when Jesus appeared to them. Jesus' resurrection was a once and for all event. He is alive never to die again. He has defeated fear and death. And that's why we celebrate today. We have come to worship Him today.

THREE PHRASES

Let's take these three statements by the angel way with us today - let's live without fear of what life can do to us and what death is Jesus is alive – and do tell others about it. Jesus wants us to live His risen life.

CROSS

So just how did Jesus dying and rising again mean that we can be right with God? When Jesus died on the cross, His blood was shed so our sins, our wrongdoing against God could be forgiven. Let's do a little study in colour.

RED DOT

We often think of sin as being black, but in Isaiah it is described as scarlet. So here's our sin.

Blood is rather red as well isn't it. So here is a SECOND RED DOT

So red plus red equals? QUESTION Red? No. White like SNOW. Our sins may be as scarlet, but because of the shed blood of Jesus, God is able to cleanse all who come to Him for forgiveness so they are as white as snow – white always signifying clean-ness, purity.

God wants each of us to have the purity that comes through the risen Jesus. If you've never trusted Him, then Jesus invites you this morning to accept the forgiveness and cleansing that comes through trusting and following Him. Are you ready? Feel free to pray this prayer with me

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to take away my sins and wrongdoing. He suffered so much on the cross for me. Thank you that he rose again from the dead and that I can know him as part of my life.

Thank you that you forgive me; take away my fear, make me your child, and give me eternal life as a gift when I place my trust totally in Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I accept you into my life as my Saviour and Lord.

Holy Spirit, please take fear from my life and fill me with your joy.

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen

#### TITLE

Most of us here have prayed a prayer like this in our lives, so I have another prayer of thanks you can pray and it's in the words of this song which we shall sing now.

#### 1528 THANK YOU FOR THE CROSS, LORD

##### INT. PRAYER

- DO NOT BE AFRAID

We lift up the names we know who are afraid, concerned, sad or grieving and need God's assurance not to be afraid.

- HE ISN'T (just) HERE

By His Holy Spirit, Jesus is now everywhere. We can bring things from anywhere in the world before Him. Suggest places.

- GO AND TELL

We light a tea light to symbolise our desire to tell someone about Jesus and show by our lives that Jesus is alive amongst our friends and neighbours.

Closing Song 378 Low in the grave He lay

Benediction: Fill us with Your joy!

O living God,

Help us to share with others the joy and hope of your resurrection

*Lord, fill us with your joy!*

Help us to shine your light into the dark places where people are in fear or danger, here or abroad.

*Lord, fill us with your joy!*

Help us to serve others with gentleness and humility, so we tell others about your love, grace and mercy.

*Lord, fill us with your joy!*

Help us to live in the fulness of the life you came to give.

*Amen!*