

All Saints Talk on Sunday 16 April 2023

Robert Page

### **'Be transformed'**

Reading: *Luke 24:13-35* The Road to Emmaus

So what was all that Easter business about? When you've kind of sat through it here at All Saints, haven't you? You know, we've done Lent. We've done Maundy Thursday. Who was here for the Maundy Thursday meal? It was fantastic. And real eye opener for me. Good Friday, who was down the hill There walking. And then of course, we had Easter day. So why did Jesus have to die? What's its significance? And more importantly, can you explain it to a friend or stranger? And Does God really love me?

So let's just run through Jesus's last week. It was the Jewish trial on the Thursday night, which was unusual. And then Friday, very early, they must have got up about seven o'clock or something like that, as soon as Daybreak, and went to over to Pilot's place and said, This guy's got to die. And then by nine o'clock, Jesus was actually on the cross. So there's an awful lot packed into that first few hours. And then at noon, darkness comes over the land and then he dies at three o'clock. And a really, really important thing at that moment is that the curtain is torn, from top to bottom in the temple, revealing the Holy of Holies. That bit that people weren't allowed to see. So God is saying, the debt for all your sin, the thing which separated us, has been paid. At that moment, you could argue we don't actually need the resurrection, because God's already said it in that temple curtain. But of course, Jesus had more work to do, and is the proof. So there was a hurried burial, and preparation for the Sabbath. Everyone had to rest on the Sabbath. Sunday is the first day of the week. And the Sabbath had held Cleopas in Jerusalem because Emmaus was too far away to go for a Sabbath day's walk, which is a short distance. And then, as he kind of gets up, bits of news come start coming in. The women come back from the tomb, had a vision of angels, we thought they were talking nonsense. Yeah. So that's, that's where we'd got to. So then they set off. Cleopas sets off probably mid afternoon. And they were kept from recognizing him. Now we have different views Pippa and I about this, you see, she says it's totally God making them not be able to recognize him. Jesus must

have looked different and sounded different. But equally, he's got a beard, he's got his hoodie. Their faces are down. I don't know who's seen Undercover Boss? It's when the boss comes and sits in with some of his staff. But it put me in mind of that. For 25 years I've been a traveling salesman and have all these amazing training meetings in fancy hotels. And then the boss says, I want to come out with you tomorrow. I see you're going to be in Swindon and he wants to know, were you at the training? Did you hear it? Did you see it? Did you understand it? And can you now talk about it to other people because that's what we've paid you to do. So there he is, he's the undercover boss. Then there's this lovely training on who is a dummy? Surely you must have heard: 'how foolish and slow you are to believe.' Because it just seems a little bit harsh doesn't it, when Jesus says 'how foolish you are'. I think it's just a little bit of fun. But anyway, so then Jesus goes through the prophets to illustrate what sort of Messiah he is and not what they'd expected. If you listened to Zacharias prayer, it's about: save us from our enemies. So immediately thinking 'Romans', and I think that was probably what everyone thought. So let's just see how that works out. Do you remember in one of the accounts of the feeding of 5000, Jesus could sense that the crowd wanted to come and take him by force to be king. This is the sort of King that Jesus wanted them to understand, that 'God so loved the world', and this is this is the core of the whole of the Easter the story Gods so loves you. Simon Flint used to say Jesus loves you with every beat of his heart; 'that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life'.

So now All Saints, we'll have a prophets competition just to see how how much we know. Which Prophet might have talked about a foal of an ass? Who said that? Zechariah. Well done.

It's also interesting that when Solomon was crowned king his he borrowed his dad's donkey, which is 1000 years ago. Zechariah is 400 years earlier.

And of course, we remember Palm Sunday. so then we've got this one: Isaiah, wasn't it? And this one's a giveaway because here is Moses and the snakes. So the people grumbling as they did out in the desert, and snakes came started biting them the snake represents who in the Bible. The devil, yes. And so I'll make a bronze snake. We'll stick it on a stick. And anyone who looks at it, and recognizes that this is God's solution to their problem of being bitten by a snake. They won't die.

Now Jesus himself quotes this one then when he's talking to Nicodemus, he says, 'just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up. Everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.' What's the link between Jesus and the snake? Sin. So when Jesus goes on the cross, it's like Satan himself is nailed to the cross, in the form of Jesus. That's hardcore, isn't it? And that's why Jesus said, 'my God my God, why have you forsaken me?'

Psalm 22. 'They divide my clothing among them.' This is actually rather touching because the soldiers had crucified Jesus and took all his gear. And when they came to the tunic that Mary had woven without a seam, they recognized it as a fine piece of handicraft made lovingly by Mary for Jesus. So they said we won't damaged it. And of course she's there weeping.

This is another Zechariah prophecy. And I'll read it out. 'And the Lord said to me throw the money to the potter, the handsome price at which they valued me. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord.' So the potter's field must have been close to the temple. And there's two bits on this one. One Gospel says that Judas threw the money down in the temple and then went off and hanged himself. Another gospel says Judas went to the potter's field, and he fell in a hole, because they'll have been taking clay out of it for hundreds of years. At least 400. So they'd have been a big hole and he died horribly. So this was blood money and so this foretells what Judas was going to do.

So what what sort of Messiah were people expecting? And it wasn't the sort that they were expecting when they tried to make him king. He would not redeem Israel by force, all at one time. Not Peter with his sword, chopping off ears. No, this was this was not the sort of Messiah that Jesus was. He is the Passover lamb to take away our sin, the King of heaven. And he would redeem Israel and the world one at a time. Personally, with love, forgiveness and adoption into his family.

Who was the real enemy? Was it the Romans or was sin in our own lives, which separates us from God? And I think that's where we are with with talking to people? Where are you? Do you need saving from the Romans? Or is it something else?

So just finishing off, then. Can you explain this to a friend without using jargon? God loves you and wants you to have your best life. Your best life. That's a phrase we hear all the time, isn't it? There's the Alpha course: the Alpha course has got a whole session on why Jesus had to die. And then there's John 3:16, which we had a little bit earlier. And then the scripture when Paul's writing about himself: 'I can resist everything except temptation. I know what I should do. But I keep doing the very opposite. Who can save me from this body that's trying to kill me?' Jesus came to take one for the team. He's the scapegoat. These are these are terms in common use, aren't they? Are these helpful to put into conversations? John 13:13 'Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one's life for one's friends'. And we see examples of self-sacrifice in the news every day. So that was going through the prophets.

So, they finally arrive at Emmaus. And what do they do? Well they're hungry? It's still Passover so we're eating flatbread for a week. How do you think he did this? This is my body? Right Cleopas, friend? And he was made known to them by the way he broke bread. And of course the other final great thing is: he has risen. He has risen. He is risen indeed. Thank you