

EASTER DAY Sermon - 2021

How many of us have received an Easter egg this morning?

Horrible aren't they?

I've got some Easter eggs for us this morning.

I thought they might help us to unpack the wonderful mystery of that extraordinary morning when Mary, Peter and John visited the tomb of Jesus.

We're going to have a CRACKING time!

1st EGG: Heroes Easter egg

"An egg with a bag of Heroes"

YUM – that sounds good!

OPEN BOX - no Heroes.....

CRACK OPEN EGG! What's inside?

Where are the Heroes? Just an empty bag!

Problem - the egg is empty; the contents we were expecting inside aren't there DISAPPOINTING

Our empty egg reminds us how that when Mary Magdelene went to visit the tomb on that first Easter morning, she got a big shock - the tomb that was supposed to contain Jesus' body was EMPTY!

It was confusing, bewildering. Where was Jesus? Mary rushed to Peter and John and told them:

"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

And we're told that when Peter looked into the tomb all he saw was the strips of linen lying there that had been wrapped around Jesus's body - a bit like our empty wrapper...

Imagine if Mary had gone to the tomb that morning and just as she'd expected, Jesus' body was lying there. That would have been the end of the

story, wouldn't it? Jesus might have been remembered in history as an interesting man, but we certainly wouldn't be worshipping him today.

In fact, we wouldn't even be meeting here this morning! If Jesus had been lying in the tomb that morning, why would anyone have continued to believe in any of the things he said about himself and promised people? The only thing that we would have been left with that morning would have been a load of EMPTY PROMISES!

But the EMPTY TOMB and the news that Jesus had risen proved that all the wonderful things that Jesus had said and promised to the disciples, but also to you and me, were and *are* true!!!

The EMPTY EGG reminds us of the EMPTY TOMB

2nd EGG - Smartie Buttons egg

OPEN THE BOX - Yes, there's the bag of Smartie Buttons.

CRACK THE EGG - Surprise! Chicks inside the egg!

Well, what else would we expect inside an egg? This time of year is a time of new life - chicks, blossom, flowers springing into bloom, new-born lambs! But even more exciting is the new life we celebrate at Easter.

What joy Mary experienced when she actually met the risen Lord!
"Rabboni!" she cried out in her joy and amazement, before rushing off to the disciples to tell them her amazing news.
Notice, she didn't say to the risen Lord:

"Oooh, Jesus, you're looking a bit rough - why don't you let us make you a nice cup of tea and that'll perk you up a bit".

NO! This was no resuscitated Jesus, back to his old life - this was the RESURRECTED Jesus - the one who had overcome the power of death and risen to a whole new, glorious, victorious life! The risen Jesus could never be touched again by death - he would never die again.

Our risen and ascended Lord Jesus is alive today, and he reigns over all. He is the King of all kings. Wonderful news indeed! Not just for Jesus, but for us too. For in rising from the dead, the promises Jesus made to his disciples and to all who would follow him are fulfilled and proved true:

Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life: anyone who believes in me, will live, even though he dies."

Though we will one day die, we too will one day rise to new life with him forever - eternal life.

Jesus's resurrection means that death and the grave no longer have the final say in our lives - rather, it is the gate through which we walk to a glorious life, reigning with the Lord Jesus! What a tremendous hope that gives us!

An Egg with chicks in - reminding us of NEW LIFE through the Resurrection

3rd EGG - A mystery egg: it's a Cadbury's egg in an Asda box!

CRACK OPEN THE EGG

What's inside? A feast of different vibrant-coloured mini chocolate eggs!

Our Mystery egg produced a great surprise and much more than we expected. Jesus's friends received a great surprise when they visited the tomb - things turned out far better than they could ever have dreamed of.

The good news is that the resurrection doesn't just mean that those who follow him have the promise of new life / eternal life beyond this life. Jesus's resurrection means that for those who trust in Him and follow him there is a wonderful, vibrant new life to be enjoyed and experienced here on earth.

Jesus promised: "I have come that you may have life - and have it to the full" (John 10:10)

Of course, Jesus wasn't talking about us having an abundance of money, or the best of everything like food, clothes and cars. He was promising something much more meaningful and lasting than that. Because of his sacrifice on the Cross and his wonderful resurrection, now, everyone who follow Jesus can:

- enjoy a friendship with God, with the Lord Jesus himself;
- can know what it means to be truly forgiven and set free from guilt and the things that have troubled us and held us back;
- can know Jesus's love and his peace during difficult times - a sense of his being there with us;
- his guidance and wisdom;

- his power and courage;
- his joy, even when times are tough....

Our mystery egg filled with multi-coloured mini eggs reminds us of the vibrant FULLNESS OF LIFE that we can live and know today, tomorrow and for eternity.

The moment we turn to Jesus Christ and make him Lord of our life and start following him, his new life which started on the day of his Resurrection becomes our new life as well.

SO:

- 1) Our empty egg reminds us of the surprise of the empty tomb that first Easter morning
- 2) Our egg with chicks in reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead to a new, glorious and everlasting life - and that we too will be raised to that same new, glorious and everlasting life
- 3) And our Mystery egg with its vibrant, multi-coloured mini eggs reminds of the vibrant, fullness of life which Jesus has won for us here on earth and in eternity.

We have so much to celebrate this Easter Day as we enjoy our Easter eggs!