



Exploring Easter – Peter's Story

Jesus is alive! John 20:1-23

Peter tried to settle down to sleep, but immediately his heart started pumping and his mind buzzing – he just couldn't get over the events of the last few hours. Jesus is alive. It was true. He had seen him with his own eyes.

This morning as he ran to the tomb with the other disciple all sorts of thoughts were tumbling through his head as he processed what Mary had told them when she woke them up in a state 'Jesus's body is gone' she had said, 'they have taken him and we don't know where they have put him'. Having seen the state of the crowd on Friday, Peter could well believe that someone could pull a cruel trick, but really what could they want with a dead body?

When they arrived at the tomb though, it did not feel like the scene of a burglary. Yes, the massive stone that was rolled across the entrance had been moved to one side, but the ground was not scuffed with the feet of the many people needed to carry a dead weight. And, eventually when they had the courage to go inside, the strips of cloth that had been wound around Jesus's body were laying neatly folded in a pile.

Once again nothing made sense, but this time the confusion Peter felt was not founded in the fear and terror of the last few days. Later when Mary had returned from the graveside again, weeping with joy, Peter wasn't actually surprised when she told them she had seen Jesus. And that she had mistaken him for the gardener until he had spoken to her. He was starting to realise that God was indeed in control and something was going on that was far bigger than they had imagined when they had answered Jesus' simple call to follow him.

Although as Jesus' friends had gathered for their evening meal, locking the door in fear of what could happen next – he couldn't join in with the excited chatter.

Nothing had really changed - they were still frightened, they were still in danger, and Jesus ... well Jesus was still gone.

As Peter rolled on his back and put his hands behind his head it dawned on him that Jesus always had a way of catching him out. Not in a mean way, but as if he knew exactly what Peter was thinking. Because just as he was about to tell the others to shut up with their wishful thinking, there was Jesus standing right in front of him smiling at him with those twinkly eyes as if to say 'really Peter!'. The room had immediately become silent as everyone stared open mouthed, and Peter had realised that tears of joy were rolling down his face as Jesus said 'peace be with you'. It was true! Jesus really was alive, and he had spent the evening with them reminding them of all that he had shared with them so that they could do tell others, and telling them that he would be with them as the Holy Spirit to give them strength and courage and wisdom.

Peter's eyelids started to droop at last. 'Peace be with you!' Jesus had said again as he had left them... Peace...