

Easter Day Service, Readings, Sermon. 10/04/2022

Easter Day Sermon

I went to see Pat my Hair Dresser for a haircut – great bloke Pat.

As soon as I sat down he asked me what I believed about life after death.

I said – this is what Easter is all about.

He said he knows all that church stuff – I want to know what Dave believes.

I was a bit stuck.

What does Dave believe?

I believe what I have been taught – I believe all that church stuff - but I knew that was not what he was looking for.

He wanted to know about my firsthand experience with Life after death.

What does Dave believe? Well Dave believes in what he has learned.

Dave has no real first-hand experience of life after death.

Is believing in what you have learned a bad thing?

Over the years I have been very critical of the women and the disciples after Jesus resurrection – especially the women – the Mary’s – it seems they didn’t believe – like others they all went to the tomb to embalm a dead body.

None of them expected Jesus resurrection.

For some reason these women are revered as the greatest evangelists of all time – the first to tell the world the great message “Jesus is Risen”.

Did they?

Matthew

In Matthew it says, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary?? went to have a “look at the tomb” – not a clue that Jesus had risen. They met an Angel who told them what had happened, they even met Jesus to their surprise and they ran away scared (yet with joy) to tell the disciples – the Disciples went to Galilee.

Mark

Mark says the women went to embalm Jesus dead body but left trembling and confused – they didn’t tell anyone because they were afraid

Luke

Luke says the women went to embalm Jesus dead body. Then they went and told the disciples that he wasn’t there.

The disciples did not believe them, “because their words seemed like nonsense”

John

John says the women were convinced someone stole the body of Jesus – the body, they were going to embalm

They were sacred, there was much crying – and two angels had quite a job to convince them that Jesus had risen

The Disciples were huddled behind locked doors – scared of the Jews and Jesus appeared to them and proved to all of them that it was really him by showing them his scars. Then they went fishing.

None of the women or the Disciples were believers – none of them believed he would rise from death; they were all carrying embalming fluids and were sacred, crying.

Their faith and belief came painfully slow as Jesus had to convince and teach them – over and over.

If my mate Pat were to ask the Marys or the Disciples, immediately after Jesus' death, what they believed about life after death, they would have answered “nothing – we don't believe in anything”.

They were taught many times that Jesus would rise on the third day – they were taught this over and over again – **but on the third day they came to embalm a dead body they didn't even believe what they were taught.**

It's not a bad thing to believe what you have been taught.

Of course there is the risk that you are taught bad things.

But a good teacher and a good learner research things and compare notes and are satisfied that what is taught is the truth.

Let me put it to you now.

What do you believe about life after death?

Just before Jesus was crucified he raised Lazarus from death – He did this to teach us that he too will rise from death, and that we who believe will also rise from death.

Likewise on Good Friday the very moment Jesus died

‘the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy

people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.'

I believe this is written to teach us what will happen on the last day - the day all people are resurrected.

We know what will happen on the last day because of what is written – because of what is taught.

We're going to have all these people rising from their graves and walking and talking and “going into the city”.

We're taught there will be much joy.

We're taught that death will have no hold over us.

We believe this, we confess this in our Creeds.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen

Each week we confess that we believe in the resurrection of the dead – we look forward to the resurrection of the dead.

If tomorrow was the last day what would you do?

In other words, Pats question, ‘What do you really believe about life after death?’

What do you believe?

The Mary's and the Disciples believed nothing.

If tomorrow was the last day would you be at the cemetery welcoming old Orma or Orpa as they rise from their graves.

This is what will happen? This is what we confess?

There is nothing wrong with believing what you have been taught – There is nothing wrong with staking your life on what you have been taught – so long as you trust your teacher.

The Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit are our teachers.

All you fathers and mothers, God parents, are the teachers of the church – somewhere in history you promised to teach your kids about Jesus.

I suppose I have been a bit harsh on the Women and the Disciples again.

But please know they did eventually believe in Jesus and the resurrection in particular.

They did form the first body of believers - the early Christian church.

They were persecuted for their faith.

Funny how the Holy Spirit can create a strong Christian church and a teaching which will last forever from such a mob of slow ‘believers’.

And now we believe because of those slow believers – slow learners..

What do you believe – I believe what I have been taught – I have no experience – I am not ashamed of that.

You know there are whole Christian communities in the New Testament who never saw Jesus. They became people of faith by what Paul taught them.

Listen to what John writes to people like me:

This is written just after Jesus allowed Thomas to poke and prod him so that Thomas could believe.

John 20, It’s called the “The Purpose of John’s Gospel”.

Jesus performed many other signs/miracles in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

God doesn’t expect first hand experience – he asks us to listen, to be teachable, and to allow the Holy Spirit to work in us.

Believe and trust what you have been taught - and that by believing you may have life in his name.

And it goes without saying we are blessed to be a blessing – we have taught so that we can teach.

The whole foundation of the church the Easter story is taught by teachers and it leaned with the help of the Holy Spirit.

If you have a heart beat you have a job to teach especially the young ones about Jesus.

What does Paul say: Romans 10:17 Father comes from hearing the message about Jesus,

Amen.

Father we thank you for the message passed down through the generations – passed on that we may believe.

Father we look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.