

Sunday, 17 April 2022: Resurrection People

Led by Rev. Sam Mawhinney.

Coffee & Cake (10-11 am)

Welcome & Call to Worship:

Welcome to ARPC, welcome to the family of the risen Lord Jesus, welcome on this glorious first day of the week, welcome as we meet and rejoice together because Jesus is not dead but alive, he is not in the tomb but in heaven, welcome because Satan does not now rule the world Jesus does, welcome because our sins are forgiven and everyone from every nation is included. Welcome to worship this Easter Sunday morning.

Reading Matthew 28:1-10

Hymn of Preparation: Resurrection Hymn (See, What A Morning)

Prayers of Adoration & Confession

Our dear heavenly Father, we bow before you on this Easter Sunday. As we have read and have sung, we believe with the two Mary's that the tomb is empty. We see the folded grave clothes; we do not see Jesus. He is not here, He has risen. Just as he said. We hear the witness of the disciples, men and women who saw and testify that he has risen from the dead. We see Jesus speaking with the ladies, overwhelmed in fear and wonder, holding onto his legs, afraid to let go and we worship with them. We look again and see Jesus exalted and sitting at his Father's right hand and we fix our eyes on him. Lord, we worship you, we bow in your presence, we come to you in all your resurrected glory. We see you worthy of all our attention, lost in wonder, love and praise.

You see you holy, pure and great and we are conscious of our sin. Of inappropriate, unworthy and distracted thoughts. Of half-heartedness and other idols. Lord in this moment of fresh revelation of your glory we confess our sin, we admit our unworthiness, deserving of punishment and exclusion from your sight, forever.

We hear the voice that spans the years, speaking life, stirring hope and bringing peace to us. We hear you say you are my child, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased. How can that be, Lord? Because I died for you, I paid the price and it is finished, you are forgiven, redeemed, cleansed and made new by the power of the Holy Spirit. We fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross. The joy of seeing our faces, of welcoming us into his presence and family, of seeing us made a new creation with the hope of glory.

We lift our voices to ask of him our Father in heaven the provision of all we need today. We pray the prayer Jesus taught us, Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for yours in the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever Amen.

Reading: Matthew 28:11-20

Sermon:

When I was at university the question I was asked by my friends who didn't yet believe in Jesus was what evidence is there for his resurrection from the dead. I do not hear many asking this question today. It is more likely that people would say, you say Jesus rose from the dead, what does that mean, and what purpose does that serve? Both are good questions, what evidence is there for the resurrection of the dead, and what purpose does the resurrection serve?

I am happy to talk to you about the strong evidence for Jesus's resurrection from the dead, but my task today is to outline from Matthew 28 the purpose the resurrection served, looking closely at v16-20, the passage known as the great commission.

If it is true, that Jesus has risen from the dead that changes everything. It is a message to be shared, repeated and reinforced. When you are at the doctors and the news is very significant it is hard to take the information in. A good doctor will take time, repeat the details often and usually be happy to have another person listen in. Significant news takes time to grasp and process.

We see this in the unfolding story of Jesus' appearances after death to his disciples both men and women.

The angel (messenger from heaven) delivers a message to the two Mary's (v5-7) It was and remains the most fantastic, the most important, message for them, for the disciples and for the world. *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."* Then the angel tells them to *"go quickly and tell his disciples"*.

Jesus meets the two Mary's, they worship him, fall at his feet and clasp them, in an act of humble worship confirming he is a bodily reality, and he tells them, *"Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

Even the Roman guards go and tell the Jewish authorities who employed them for the specific task of preventing the disciples from stealing Jesus' body. *"The guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened."*

The news is repeated and confirmed, it is spreading, and it is being believed. Then Jesus meets the apostles (11) at a mountain in Galilee as arranged. (v16)

This is good news, confirmed by heavenly messengers, by two women who were very close friends of Jesus and eyewitnesses of his death, by the guards who confirm at the very least that the stone was rolled away, the body of Jesus has gone, and they meet some incredible shining man dressed in white who scared them to death! (almost) Confirmed by the Jewish religious leaders who paid a lot of money to deny what they had been told in a story circulating to this very day (AD 50-64) and noted by Justin in the 2nd Century. This is good news to be believed, understood and passed on to others. Jesus Christ died and has risen.

I. Some disciples doubted (v.17):

A. What they saw.

Matthew, one of the twelve, writes, *"when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted."* It appears to be a contradiction, worship and uncertainty. While they struggle to believe the news they heard, of his resurrection, they saw was Jesus. They were not the only ones. The two disciples on the Emmaus Road didn't initially recognise him, the twelve disciples at the lakeside didn't initially grasp who it was that spoke to them. It was incredulous that the person they saw hanging on a Roman cross and placed in a tomb could be alive. Was it a dream, a hoax? The body of Jesus is different, a resurrection body. They doubted the reality they saw.

The other argument used points to the possibility that Matthew is not referring to the eleven but the larger group of disciples (more than 500) whom Paul mentions in 1st Corinthians Ch 15. The emphasis then on the some and not the eleven disciples.

B. What their purpose was.

There is another possibility noted by Charles Price in his comments on this passage. They doubted because they didn't know what all this meant. Yes, they saw Jesus, in the familiar surroundings of Galilee and the mountainside, they believed it was him risen from the dead, but they didn't know what this meant for them. Jesus is alive, what does that mean for us? Does he have any further use for us? What is our purpose? What is our mission?

The commission Jesus gave to the disciples answers this question of purpose.

II. The disciple's purpose → Make disciples (v.18-20)

A. All authority has been given to Jesus

When Jesus came to earth, he humbled himself (Philippians Ch 2). Satan had the authority over the Kingdoms of the earth, and he was able to offer them to Jesus when he tempted him in the wilderness (Matthew Ch 4) On earth he was as Isaiah described him as, *"a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, he was despised and not esteemed."* But now, he has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Authority given by his Heavenly Father, raised from sin and shame and death and ascended and exalted and seated at his right hand. The authority is supreme because his victory is complete.

We speak of having a seal of approval, we recognise the authority of a uniform for example the guards, a degree, say a doctor, a letter from a government agency, say a census enumerator but Jesus' authority trumps all others. All authority.

B. Go and make disciples of all nations

What does it mean to be a disciple? What does Jesus expect his disciples to make? When they were called, Jesus said, *"come follow me"*. A disciple commits to a person, they signed themselves up to be taught by that person and follow their example. They were a learner and a follower. Discipleship is not about a decision for Jesus (Michael Green) but a lifelong surrender and union with Christ Jesus.

It is to all nations, we go, both Jews and Gentiles. This is different from Jesus previous instruction, where he limited the disciples, Matthew 12:5 *"Do not go to among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans."* Now discipleship of Jesus is a message for all, every nation and every people, the Greek word is "ethnay", literally to every ethnic group.

The fact of Jesus' resurrection and Jesus authoritative command has driven the mission of the church for the last two millennia. There are according to Google 195 countries in the world and there are Christians it appears in every single one of them.

C. Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism symbolises and seals our union with Jesus Christ for eternity, our life and destiny are intimately linked to his. 1 Cor 12:13 *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-whether Jews or Greeks slave or free-and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."*

An outward sign of an inward reality. You publicly declare your faith in the Lord Jesus and receive from God, grace to be what you are to be, a learner and a follower. As the Shorter Catechism notes (No 94) *"baptism....signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ, and our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's"*

We become authentic followers of Jesus, we change as we are taught and obey. We have the reality of his risen presence.

D. Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

The person who is a disciple is taught and the purpose of our teaching is to have obedient people. C Price again, *“Our task is not to teach people to know everything Jesus said, but to obey everything he commanded.”* This is knowledge that produces action, it is a way of life that pleases God. As God the Father said of his son on earth, *“This is my son whom I love and with whom I am well pleased.”* Matthew 3:17

E. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

This is a daunting task, and Jesus understands that, therefore in great words of reassurance he says surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age. I usually think of that as alongside, being with, but it is so much more because Jesus is not simply alongside, he is within, through our union with him. Therefore, it is not our work but his, we do not do it in our strength but in his, he is always the source of our ability to fulfil the purpose he has set for us and he will always be with us.

III. Certificate of authorization:

To whom it may concern, my disciple, (insert name here), is hereby authorized to take the Gospel message to all people everywhere, by word and example, in the power of my presence until I come again. Jesus Christ.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, our purpose is:

- to make disciples.
- global
- to tell the story of Jesus.
- to show Jesus by our life's actions
- community focused in the Church
- done with Jesus complete authority
- done in his presence and power
- to continue until Jesus returns.

The mission statement of ARPC is *“To stay and share Jesus in Dublin city centre, making disciples.”* This purpose is grounded in the fact of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and in the authoritative commission of Jesus. We are authentic disciples with the authorisation to make disciples. We are a people of purpose: resurrection people.

Praise: Hear the Call of the Kingdom

King of heaven we will answer the call, our nest song is a response from us to the call of the King and his kingdom, to proclaim and live out salvation in Jesus name.

Announcements

Next week Andrew Whiteside will lead worship and preach and following that I will begin a period of Sabbatical leave. The Church will be lead in worship by a person with different experiences and gifts each week and who love and serve the Lord Jesus. I pray that God will continue to bless you. If you have any spiritual needs do speak to the elders, Tommy Wilson as Clerk of Session and Ray Speer as our Administrator will ensure you are cared for. Do of course minister to each other.

I will be reading about biblical counselling and the emotional health of the church. I have picked five books to read on a variety of subjects related to this. I plan to meet with people to discuss ministry and emotional wellbeing. Karen and I are planning to visit Porto and I am booked to cycle from Mizen to Malin the length of Ireland. Do keep all of this in your prayers.

Covid. As you are aware we have been gradually easing up on our Covid restrictions. I want to thank you all for your compliance and patience. As from next week we will move from the mandate of wearing masks to a voluntary wearing of masks. This means that if you are vulnerable or want to wear your masks in church please continue to do so. It means that we should continue to be very careful in more crowded spaces and be aware of good hygiene etiquette. If you are in any way symptomatic do not come to church. Using antigen tests is a good idea.

Let us be thankful to God for his care of us to date, be aware of the needs of others and enjoy this new period as you can choose to not wear a mask if you think it is wise to do so.

Prayers for Others

- Church in Chains Lenten prisoners, Hao Zhiwei China, Zafar Bhatti Pakistan, Kiflu Gebremeskel Eritrea Naser Gol-Tapeh Iran, Leah Sharibu Nigeria Y Ylch Vietnam we thank you for their lives of faith and courage, we pray for their faith to keep strong and for physical healing and wellbeing, we pray for their families and for their witness and we pray for their release.
- Heavenly father we pray for those known to us who are weak and sick, we thank you for them and ask they will know your love and the love of others today. That they will be strengthened in faith and face their situation with courage and hope. We pray for those who care for them and we pray the hope of Easter and resurrection will encourage. Ken Gillanders / Rosaleen Gibson / Gerry Whyte / John Thompson
- Ukraine war Vlodymir Zelensky the leaders and army and resistance movement in Ukraine protect them and give them success against their enemy.
- ARPC thank you that you love and cherish the family here, keep us, bless us in the weeks and months to come, encourage those who come to preach and lead us in worship and service of you, for your glory.

Closing Hymn: Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Benediction