

## Thought for Easter Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

**He is risen, risen indeed, Hallelujah!      Read Matthew 28:1-17**      It's not always easy to think about what was going on in the disciples minds after Jesus died as he hung on the cross. What chapter 27 tells us is, verse 55; *'Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.'* Of course Zebedee's sons were John and James, and it is only John's gospel that says John was there, the other three gospel writers just talk of the women being there. It is well documented in the gospels that Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus for burial, having got permission from Pilate, again it is John who is the only one to mention the presence of Nicodemus assisting Joseph. Matthew tells us a secure guard was put around the tomb, but nothing is impossible to God. I will let you read verses 11-15 at your leisure. What all four gospel writers agree on is, that *'the day after the Sabbath, at dawn, on the first day of the week (Sunday), Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.'* Different gospel writers say different things. Luke says, 23:55; *'The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.'* Whereas Matthew and Mark make no mention of any preparations for the body. John 19:39-40 says; *'Joseph was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.'* 75lbs (34kilos) of myrrh and aloes is quite a weight. To give it some perspective I think of a sack of potatoes weighing 56lbs, so almost a sack and a half in weight. And the value in money would not have been small either. I can remember my wife, Chris, telling me of a man who came into the shop where she worked and bought a bunch of flowers, Chris commented, are they for your wife? He responded, yes, although sadly she'd died the year before.' He went on to say he never gave her flowers when she was alive. My wife said she felt very sad for him. How much better to show our love while we are still alive. I believe Peter was to know the truth of that fact, maybe the Saturday was the toughest time. You may remember the words of Robin Mark's song from Friday; *'The next day being Sabbath, was a day of rest and one of some reflection for the young man's friends, no longer messianic zeal consumed their hearts, just sorrow for the killing of the young man. And I suppose some tears were shed 'til sleep came last.'* We can spend a long time beating ourselves up for things we haven't done, or things we feel we could have done better, when all the Lord asks of us is to walk with him and to talk with him, and to share his love with those we come into contact with. We can get so bogged down over theological points, we end up becoming like the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the priests of Jesus' time. All four gospel writers agree, it was the women who came to the tomb, they may have reported it slightly differently, but what we know for certain is that Jesus defeated death, verse 5-7; *'the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you.'* We are told in verse 8 they *'ran to tell his disciples.'* I wonder if we are that keen to tell others of our Saviour's resurrection. Maybe we are afraid that like the disciples in Luke 24:11 people may think; *'they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.'* Of course all

the disciples were to see Jesus after his resurrection, albeit that Thomas had to wait a week. Let us not be like Thomas, let us meet together and share about our Lord and Saviour, and today, on this Easter Sunday say with confidence; **'He is risen, risen indeed, Hallelujah!'** I have quoted W Sangster before, he wrote just before he died; *'Oh the sadness that on Easter Sunday morning, not to have a voice to say 'He is risen!' – but a greater sadness is to have a voice, but not the will to say; He is risen!'* the last two verses of our reading say; *'Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted.'* Let's not judge those disciples who doubted. What had happened over that Easter weekend would have been mind blowing to anyone, even having seen the miracles that Jesus had performed over the previous three years, even having heard the teaching Jesus had given to them, this was something else. John implies, in his gospel, it was Thomas who doubted, but he wasn't there when Jesus appeared to the other ten disciples. Things were to change over the next forty days. Their faith was to be strengthened when the Holy Spirit came on them, but, as they say, that is for another day. Amen.

See what a morning, gloriously bright,  
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;  
Folded the grave-clothes, tomb filled with light,  
As the angels announce Christ is risen!  
See God's salvation plan, wrought in love,  
Borne in pain, paid in sacrifice,  
Fulfilled in Christ, the Man, for He lives:  
Christ is risen from the dead!

See Mary weeping, 'Where is He laid?'  
As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb;  
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name;  
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!  
The voice that spans the years,  
Speaking life, stirring hope,  
Bringing peace to us, will sound till He appears,  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

One with the Father, Ancient of Days,  
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty,  
Honour and blessing, glory and praise  
To the King crowned With power and authority!  
And we are raised with Him,  
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered;  
And we shall reign with Him,  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

*Keith Getty & Stuart Townend*  
Copyright © 2003 Thankyou Music