

Easter is here!

“The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed!” is the shout that will go out from our churches on Easter Sunday. We hope that we will step out into sunshine as we celebrate the amazing news of the empty tomb and the risen Lord Jesus. We will look around and find ourselves surrounded by primroses and daffodils—or maybe in a typically English way there will be dark skies and chilly winds...

I am looking forward to spending a bit of time in the garden after Easter and planting a newly turned bed. Yet, a few days ago the soil was cold and heavy, and made me think of people carrying heavy burdens, deep sadness, grief, fear or worries. It sort of fitted with how the disciples and, of course, Jesus felt as the days before Easter rolled on unrelentingly towards the cross... Jesus prepared his disciples for it, time and again, explaining that his death was to lead them on through darkness and sorrow to something more. He talked of seeds having to die in order to produce much fruit; of his death so that life could follow. As we put seeds and small plants into the dark, damp, cold of the earth, we hope that they will sprout and produce fantastic plants for us. Unless the seed goes through this process there is no strong root system or a shoot that will push into the light and grow well. Jesus pointed, and still points, his followers to hope. He promises that beyond the pain and suffering of this world there is light, life, and joy! To the thief dying beside him he promised paradise—that very day! The thief would know no more sin, guilt or fear, but instead total love, acceptance and rest. Sometimes our darkness is short, and we know that morning and sunshine will follow.

Sometimes we can only cling to a bottom line of God's love and faithfulness and his promise that he will never leave or forsake us. But the promises that were true for those followers of Jesus who experienced death and life and the joy that followed are true for those who trust Jesus in the 21st century today. As you think about the stories of Easter, see the walk of witness on Good Friday, join in one of the Church services, or hear songs of praise on the television or radio, you may find seeds of thoughts that you need to nurture and see where they lead you. Follow them, explore! You might be surprised!

God is the God of surprises!

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