

Easter Day (HC) (2020)

In the early days of the Second World War, a picture appeared in The National Geographic magazine.

It was of the outside of a barber shop in London. A bomb the night before had opened up the roof to the sky, but out front was a man writing on the plate glass window: **Open as usual. Hitler can't put out the sun.**

That, my friends, is where you and I are this morning.

Neither the Coronavirus nor threatening weather can put out the light of the Son –
S-o-n!

He is risen, and that changes everything.

The ultimate weapon of every tyrant past and present (I am speaking of death) has been snatched from him.

“The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,” says Martin Luther's great hymn.

I want to speak to you this morning on the subject: **“We're all in this together.”**

We've been hearing this slogan quite a lot of late, and it's a good one.

Just as solidarity . . . everyone pulling together . . . helped win the Second World War, so it will get us through this present crisis.

But the solidarity of which I am thinking chiefly this morning concerns a more pervasive and universal phenomenon.

It is that solidarity of which St. Paul speaks in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians when he writes: **“In Adam all die.”**

Of course, his words are demonstratively true. Over 100,000 have died worldwide from the Coronavirus virus alone.

But, that's just the tip of the iceberg. Death is a universal reality. It gives solidarity to the human race. We're all in this together.

“It is appointed unto men once to die,” says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and we know this is true.

And yet, there is something within us that that rebels. In the words of Tennyson.

“Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die.”

In our gut we know we were made for something more, yet death comes to all.

That's the bad news. We are all in this together.

The good news is that Easter entered something new into the equation.

The verse I partially quoted earlier does not end with: “In Adam all die.” No, it continues:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

In the same section of verses, we are told that Jesus is the *first-fruits* of them that slept.

What might that word ‘first-fruits’ signify?

Think of being outside in late winter. There is snow on the ground, but bravely poking its head up through that snow is a single daffodil.

What does that daffodil say?

Is it just a one-of pretty sight?

No, it's a sign and a harbinger of something greater.

It says winter is about over. Many more daffodils are coming.

Just so with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It says many more resurrections are coming. That is what that word “first-fruits” is all about.

As there is solidarity in the human plight, so there is there is solidarity in the God-sent solution.

But, how can I avail myself of this solution? How can I live . . . really live . . . live now and for all eternity?

How can I be rescued from being a fearful, self-centred, defensive person to one who possesses the very life of God?

Thankfully the Scriptures are very forthright in telling us.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” says Paul to the Philippian jailor in Acts 16:31.

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,” writes John in the magnificent prologue to His Gospel.

To *believe*, of course, means more than to give bare mental assent to a few facts about Jesus. It has been correctly said that the devil believes all the articles of the Christian Creed, yet is not a Christian.

What then does “believe” mean? Well, it means being honest with God. Laying your sins, failures, your most cherished hopes and dreams, your very self-identity, at His feet, and saying: **“Deal with all of these.”**

“I believe you are the true King, the Lord of all creation.”

“I believe your death on the cross was for me. My failures were placed and nailed there.”

“I believe you love me and want to make me into a new person, a better person, a person with a purpose and goal, a sharer in your divine life.”

“From here on out, I want to go your way.”

Once a man was making a speech on a street corner in Chicago. The times were hard, and his pitch to those who gathered to hear him went like this:

“I want to propose an economic system that will put a new coat on every man.”

After finishing his spiel, he asked defiantly: Can anyone top that?”

One man – probably a preacher – shouted back. “I can. What about putting a new man in every coat?”

The God we meet in the resurrected Christ can and wants to do just that in your life.

That is why the Easter message is good news. News which goes out regardless of pandemics . . . regardless of the state of the economy . . . regardless of the weather.

Receive that news this morning. Believe it. Confess Jesus as the Lord and leader of your life, and do it now, whether you are in your automobile or at home in front of your computer screen.

And if you have already done it, reaffirm your belief in the risen Jesus, the conquer of sin and death. Be that new man in the coat. ///

And then finally, as I close, like Mary Magdalene in today’s Gospel, who came very early and found the tomb empty, be swift in going and sharing that news with someone else.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! Say it out loud!