



Hello and welcome from Mervyn to our unique All Age Easter Morning Celebration.

Even in these strange times, especially in these strange times we remember and celebrate the event that

CHANGED EVERYTHING!

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

HE IS RISEN! Hallelujah!

Our first song...

Low in the grave He lay,
Jesus, my Saviour,
Waiting the coming day,
Jesus, my Lord!

Chorus

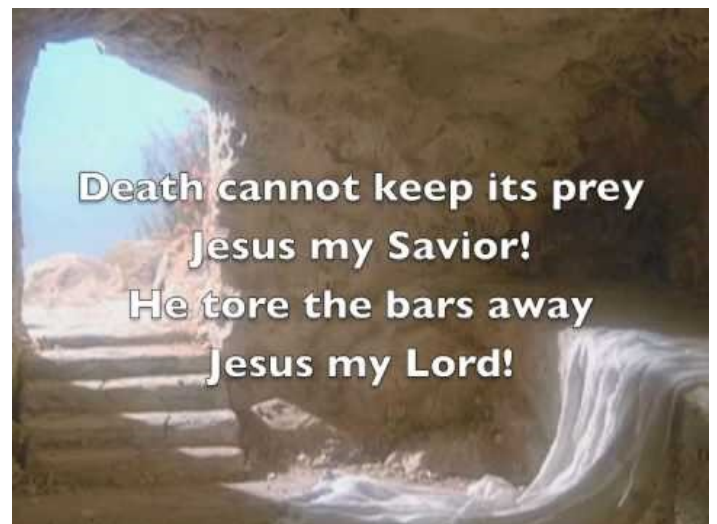
Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes,
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus, my Saviour;
Vainly they seal the dead,
Jesus, my Lord!

Death cannot keep his Prey,
Jesus, my Saviour;
He tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Lord!



This first song written in 1874 by Robert Lowry takes me back to my childhood, This was the hymn that came out every Easter Sunday.



This is a picture of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

Many people believe it could be the actual tomb that was used by Jesus as there is considerable archaeological evidence to support this view.



Let's pray together

Lord Jesus, we come to you on this special morning with out thanks , worship and praise!

We want to thank you that you were willing to die that cross to take the punishment for the wrongdoing of all humanity. We thank you that you offer forgiveness, freedom and eternal life to all who call out to you and that your blood is able to cleans us from all sin and make us new.

We worship you because death was unable to hold you and you rose from the grave! You have defeated death and broken its permanent hold over humanity. We especially praise you for this at this time when so many people are touched by the fear and pain of death.

We ask that you would comfort all who are grieving at this time and bring them, and us into the glorious hope that with you death is not the end, and that your perfect love would drive out all our fears.

We also ask that you would bless all the key workers at this time, that you would protect them, encourage them and give them the strength and resources they need. Thank you for all they are doing.

We pray especially for the families of key workers who have lost their lives in this current battle and ask that you would help each of us to play our small part in turning the tide in the fight against coronavirus.

Help us all to get to know you more during this difficult time.

In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**

Our Little Nippers video this week was about bees.

Why are we so cautious around bees,
wasps and hornets?

Because we fear their sting!



I remember coming home from church one Sunday when we lived in Devon, getting out of the car and seeing a hornet on the drive. I instinctively stamped on it, then removed my foot to check it was definitely despatched!

However, there was no sign of the hornet anywhere *and then the thought occurred to me that perhaps it may have gone up my trouser leg!* I removed my trousers as fast as I could and as I was taking them off I felt the sting. *It got me!*

Our old neighbours still laugh about the day they saw me get out of the car and suddenly take off my trousers on the drive!!



At Easter we celebrate that death has lost its sting. Here are some words from **1 Corinthians 15 54-57 in the Bible**

'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'

"Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

If bees and hornets etc had no sting, would we fear them at all?

What does it mean to us that Jesus has removed the sting of death?

To help us cement the concept that death has lost its sting we have an alternative Easter egg hunt, we're going to have a sting hunt!!

Can you help the bee find its sting in the picture? It's basically a small black triangle!!



Our next song and our final song today both mention the concept that death has lost its sting!

1 Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

2 Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

3 Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

4 Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

The last line of that hymn implies that we have different crosses to carry at times.

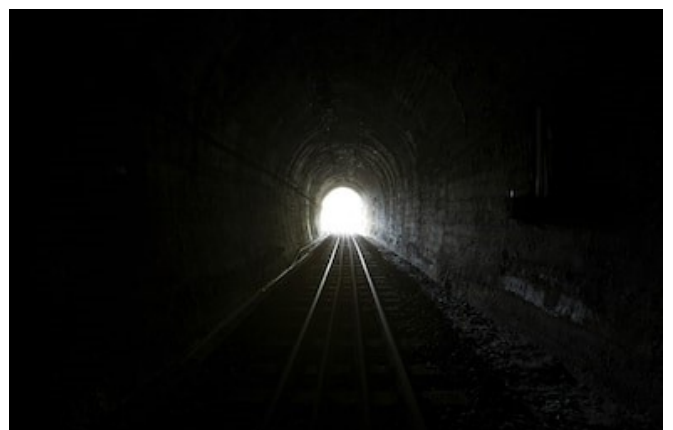
Easter Sunday reassures us that there is a light at the end of every dark, difficult tunnel, even the tunnel of death.

There's a light, there's a light at the end of the tunnel, because of Easter day.

Jesus Christ has risen, He has opened up the way.

So give your life to Jesus, His promises are true

Some tunnels may seem long, but he'll never let go of you!



Our main Bible reading today is not from one of the accounts of the resurrection found in the 4 Gospels, but the later writings of one of the people who was an **eye witness** to the events around Jesus' death and resurrection. He actually went **inside the tomb** on the day Jesus rose!

Our reading is from **1 Peter 1 3-9**. Just 183 words that are really worth memorizing, they are wonderful medicine for the mind, body and emotions!

Jewellers often display diamonds against a black backdrop to highlight the beauty of the stone. These words from the Bible set against the current world situation shine with extra beauty.



Watch out for the words/phrases highlighted in red and we'll unpack them a little more.

³ **Praise** be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us **new birth** into a **living hope** through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an **inheritance** that can never perish, spoil or fade. This **inheritance** is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are **shielded** by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In all this you **greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while you may have had to **suffer** grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith - of **greater worth** than gold, which perishes even though **refined** by fire - may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you **love** him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an **inexpressible and glorious joy**, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The words in red have really blessed me recently so Let's take a closer look.

New birth, Living hope and Resurrection

Wow, we could spend hours on just these, but for me this says there's a way bigger picture. This earthly life is just a tiny part of our existence and there's a invitation to us all to be born into God's family, live a life filled with hope and spend eternity in a whole new dimension with Jesus!

Inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade

Recently, so many things that people have been looking forward to have been spoilt, dreams have died and people have suffered loss. Jesus exhorts us to build up treasure in heaven where nothing is lost! The more we share our heavenly inheritance, the bigger it gets!

Shielded by Gods power

We can be completely confident in Gods plan for our lives. Every day of your life was written in his book before anyone else knew you would even exist! And each day is held by his love and power. Not only shielded in this life, but also in the spiritual, eternal realm.

Greatly rejoice - Suffer - Refine

We refine something when we see something of greater value in it! It's paradoxical to rejoice in suffering, but when know the joy that God is at work in our suffering and struggles that assures us that we are of great value to him and he is achieving something of eternal value.

Greater worth than gold

We live in a consumeristic culture where advertisers tell us that more stuff or better stuff leads to happiness, but this does not ultimately satisfy the human heart. Only a relationship with Jesus can satisfy our deepest desires.

Love

We love him because he first loved us! The whole thing is an incredible love story and life is an opportunity to work out the puzzle of love. Greater love has no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friends. We are made in God's image and we see some of this sacrificial love being demonstrated in our hospitals at this time.

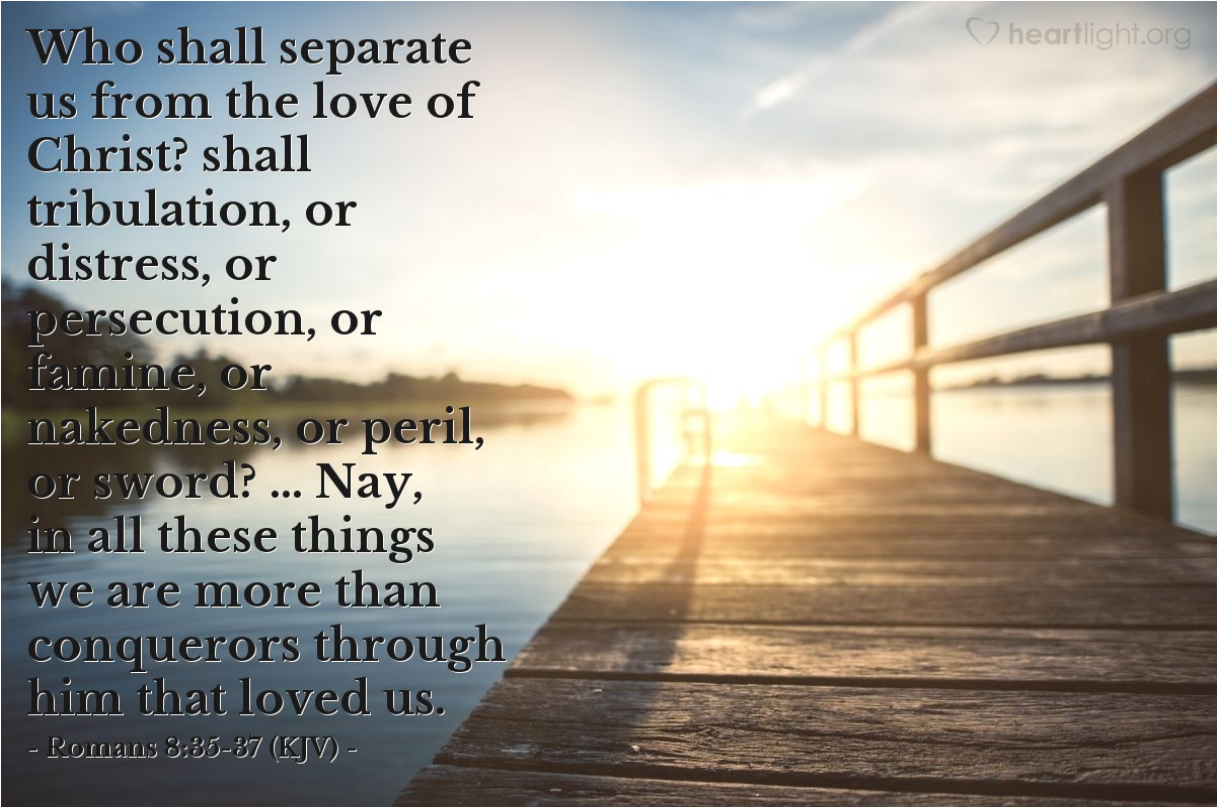
Filled with inexpressible and glorious joy

To experience the tiniest drop of Gods love and presence is intoxicating, nothing else brings greater delight to the human spirit. We have glimpses of his presence in nature, music, children, relationships, art, friendships and even suffering.

Praise!

I left praise to the end, because if we get a handle on the others it will be our natural response!

I pray that you may experience a tiny drop of Gods love and presence today!



Who shall separate
us from the love of
Christ? shall
tribulation, or
distress, or
persecution, or
famine, or
nakedness, or peril,
or sword? ... Nay,
in all these things
we are more than
conquerors through
him that loved us.

- Romans 8:35-37 (KJV) -

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Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory,
Thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes
Where Thy body lay.

Chorus

Thine be the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory,
Thou o'er death hast won;

Lo! Jesus meets us,
Risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom;
Let the church with gladness,
Hymns of triumph sing;
For her Lord now liveth,
Death hath lost its sting.

No more we doubt Thee,
Glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without Thee;
Aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors,
Through Thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan
To Thy home above.

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of
the Holy Spirit be with us now, and evermore. Amen