

Good morning – I hope you are all well and have had a blessed and joyful Easter.

The end of Luke's gospel and first couple of chapters in Acts sets the scene for today's talk about "**Resurrection People**".

- Jesus blessing his followers & explaining the gospel message from the Old Testament scriptures.
- Affirming the disciples as messengers of the gospel/good news.
- Reminding them of the promised Holy Spirit, who would empower them.

By the end of **Acts 2** a growing number of prayerful believers are already eagerly fellowshiping & praising God on a regular basis as a result of the gospel message of salvation in Jesus' name.

I'm accepted, I'm forgiven,
I am Fathered by the
true and living God.
I'm accepted, no condemnation,
I am loved by the
true and living God.
There's no guilt or fear
as I draw near
To the Saviour and Creator
of the world.
There is joy and peace as I release
my worship to you, O Lord.



Resurrection was the "buzzword" of the early church. A powerful, life-changing word, impacting the lives of so many people, then and now.
So:

Who are resurrection people?
What makes them tick?
What do they look like?

Paul, a renowned Jewish scholar, was one of them. He was converted & called by God to take the good news message everywhere, particularly to the Gentiles. In his letter to the Philippians, he writes:

***I want to know Christ and the POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION,
and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings,
becoming like him in death, and so, somehow,
to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Phil 3:10)***

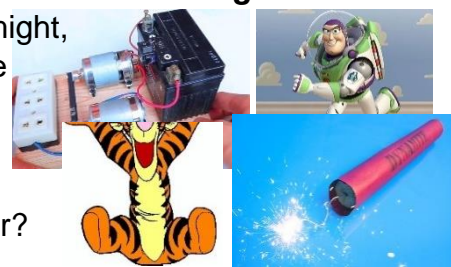
Let's look at POWER:

DUNAMAI: to be able or possible. The "**you can**" and "**you are able**" – the **will** power v the **won't** power! Positivity "**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**".

DUNAMIS: a force, power (including miraculous), ability, might, strength. Used a lot in Acts & Paul's letters. It's from where we get **dynamite** & we know how powerful dynamite is!

DUNAMOO: to enable, strengthen confirm. Root for our word **dynamo**, a generator producing electric current.

Oh, Tigger & Buzz Lightyear! Where do they fit in, I wonder?



The early church experienced a dynamic outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

- miraculous healings, prophecies, speaking in tongues etc
- powerful, life-changing words, actions & testimonies, resulting in challenging, encouraging, lifestyle change.

So far, we can deduce that Resurrection People are:

- **People of Privilege, Promise, Prayer & Praise, Purpose, Power**

To further explore the questions posed earlier, I have taken the 1st word that sprung into my mind when contemplating resurrection: **ALIVE!** Physically & spiritually alive.

A bit like a word game, I'm using each letter of ALIVE as a basis to discover answers.

Resurrection People are:

A: *Active, (right) Attitude, Anticipators, Assured, Affirmed, Alert, Available, Ambassadors, Accepted.....*

ACTIVE ANTICIPATORS!

Imagine the excitement running through the veins of Jesus' followers. Grasping all that had happened. Eagerly anticipating what was coming next. Clothed with power from on high: baptised in the Holy Spirit! Ready to embark on spirit-led adventure.

Being on fire for God, eagerly anticipating what's to come & what He's calling them to do.

Question: is that you/me right now?

Me? Well, yes....and no. As a resurrection person, I know about dying to self & being raised ALIVE in Christ, yet that Dunamai WILL/WON'T power sometimes struggles within.

A bit like these 3 friends from 100 Acre Wood. Sometimes my spirit equates to Tigger's dynamic bouncy, trouncy energy. Other times I empathise with Eeyore. The sort of guy who, having inwardly struggled to make the decision to get up in the morning, looks out of the window at a cloudless, perfectly blue sky & sunshine & says:

"Oh.....better take my umbrella. It just might rain!"



During the latest lockdown, "*Plodding on*", "*same old, same old*", "*just got to get on with it*" are some expressions I've heard & then used! Complete empathy with Eeyore instead of actively anticipating what God might be doing in the world today & how He might use me.



We all need a bit of encouraging TLC at times, especially when lethargy creeps in. Paul speaking to Timothy urges him "**to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you....**" & we are regularly encouraged to "**not grow weary & give up**".

It's so easy to fall into the "*same old, same old*" trap, which is why remaining plugged into Holy Spirit is crucial to staying alive, alert and awake, applying God's powerful word into our lives. Like the Bereans in **Acts 17**, who eagerly listened to the gospel message preached by Paul & searched the Old Testament scriptures daily.

Unlike wary Eeyore, Winnie the Pooh seems to have got it right! His constant craving is honey. Scripture tells us God's word is like honey.

***How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!"***

Psalm 119:103



And God's word is **ALIVE!** Here are 2 versions of **Hebrews 4:12**:

For the word of God is quick and powerful....

For the word of God is living and active.....

Peter, in his 2nd letter, encourages Resurrection people to "***look forward to the day of God and speed its coming***". Active anticipation.

In the Lord's prayer we say "***Your kingdom come, Your will be done***". Make it personal:

My Father in heaven. Holy is Your name.

***Your kingdom come, Your will be done in my life today,
as it is in heaven.***

Pepper the day with active prayers of anticipation.

L: Loved, Loving, Learning, Living, Long-suffering, Loyal.....

LIMITLESS LOVE SONG

God is love (1 John 4:8). That's who He is and who resurrection people are to imitate. Love has been the subject of several excellent talks recently. God's love is both powerful and limitless, as Paul reminds us in his letter to the Ephesians:

***I pray that you, being rooted and established in LOVE,
may have POWER, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep
is the LOVE of Christ, and to know this LOVE that surpasses knowledge –
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fulness of God.***

Ephesians 3:17-19

This limitless love has always existed between Father God and Jesus, almost like a beautiful song. Scripture speaks of it in various places eg at both the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus, God says: ***This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17; 17:5)***; Jesus says:....***you loved me before the creation of the world.... (John 17:24-26)***.

This song of limitless-love has never been limited, though. Though sin separated us from God, Jesus' perfect sacrifice paved the way for reconciliation.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.....(John 3:16)

For the next part of the verse, we will move onto the next letter of ALIVE.

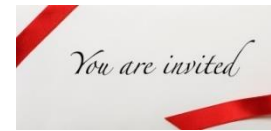
I: Invited, Involved, Individual, Imitators of Christ, Included, Ignited.....

INVITED & IGNITED TO INFINITY & BEYOND

So, this title is not 100% scriptural, but hopefully you'll see how the connection to Buzz Lightyear fits!

***.....that WHOSOEVER believes in him
shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)***

The invitation to receive the hope of eternal life through believing in Jesus is for anyone. WHOSOEVER. But it requires an INDIVIDUAL response.



For the last 2,000 years the WHOSOEVER invitation has been spoken about, sung about, preached and written about. Some ignore, scorn or discard it. Others add it to the “things to do” pile, but never get round to checking it out. Some receive it gratefully and are ignited by the Holy Spirit as followers of Jesus: Resurrection people.

If you’ve not yet responded to this all-inclusive invitation, then be assured there’s no time like the present to do so.

Resurrection people are deeply loved by God and, as imitators of Christ, live as a reflection of God’s love to those around them. It is our hallmark. God’s love is immeasurable, but also available. We must plug into the Holy Spirit and activate it, thus igniting us to love others as He does. Why to Infinity & Beyond? To me, it speaks of going beyond what we know. Paul writes this to the Corinthians:

***No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those that love Him. (1Cor 2:9)***

God reveals marvellous things to us now by His Spirit. But.....the best is yet to come!

V: Victorious, Valued, Vigilant, Valiant, Virtuous.....

VICTORY MARCH

Resurrection people are in a spiritual battle against the world, the flesh and the devil. We are urged to be alert and on guard against assaults from one or other of these enemies, seeking to erode our faith, bring us down and snuff out the Spirit of God in us. Which is why we are counselled to wear the armour He has given us (**Ephesians 6:10-18**). To put our God suits on daily and join the victory march!

Christ has defeated sin, death and the devil at the cross, by rising victorious. He was crucified in weakness but raised in power. We, too, despite our natural weakness, are called to live a victorious life in Christ, embracing that resurrection power. How? By calling on the name of Jesus. His name is another power tool. It is in his name we can pray powerful prayers and anticipate powerful results. It’s no wonder our spirits grieve when we hear that name misused in society.

Paul describes us as being ***more than conquerors through him who loved us (Roman 8:37)***. How? Because the one in us, the Holy Spirit, is greater than any enemy opposition **1 John 4:4**.

There is a well-known hymn whose chorus starts:

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow.....

But the Spanish translation goes like this:

Because he lives, I will triumph tomorrow....

Being victorious overcomers is for now, in our physical, daily lives, as well as for the future when we will be clothed with immortality. Whatever our battles – addictions, ill-health, work

or family concerns – we can not only face them tomorrow with Jesus by our side, but also triumph over them because we have the victory through him.

E: Eternal, Everlasting, Enthusiastic, Empowered, Enriched, Equipped, Encouraged Encouragers....

ENRICHED & EMPOWERED FOR ETERNITY



Over Easter I enjoyed eating store bought fruity hot cross buns as well as making some chocolate & ginger ones at home. Hot cross buns require an enriched dough by adding butter, egg, & milk. Then the dough is packed with fruit (or maybe chocolate & ginger!), before being kneaded & shaped.

The Holy Spirit enriches the lives of resurrection people with faith, hope & love sweetened by God's grace & seasoned with God's powerful word. He packs us with fruit of the spirit, spirit gifts & other delicious life-changers and with tough love, shapes us into the people He's calling us to be, raised up as heirs with Christ, seated in heavenly places.

Empowered is one of our buzzwords today – empowering women, empowering the abused & vulnerable, empowering those who've been exploited and so on. Resurrection people are empowered by the Holy Spirit, activating faith-filled words and faith-filled lives in the powerful name of Jesus.

One of our children's favourite books as a youngster was The Never-ending Story. Resurrection life is the beginning of a new life in Christ for those who choose it. It is the beginning of a never-ending, everlasting story in the kingdom of God, a story of our eternal hope and destiny. For now and for the future. To infinity and beyond!

Summary of who Resurrection People are, what they look like and how they live their lives. They are:

- **Privileged People** – knowing Jesus as friend, brother, Saviour, Lord and coming King.
- **People of Promise** – God's children/family, standing on the promises of God from Genesis to Revelation.
- **People of Prayer and Praise** – power tools of God's kingdom; praying and praising in the powerful name of Jesus.
- **People of Purpose** – to share the gospel, the good news, as ambassadors for Christ.
- **People of Power** – through the indwelling Holy Spirit, igniting us on our journey

Resurrection people are **ALIVE!** and have responded to the **SONG of LIMITLESS LOVE** by accepting the **IGNITED INVITATION**, so becoming **ACTIVE ANTICIPATORS** in the **VICTORY MARCH, ENRICHED & EMPOWERED FOR ETERNITY.**

To conclude, some words from Rachel's prayer a few weeks ago:

Love radically, speak powerfully, serve sacrificially.....AMEN



RHIANNON TODAY



STEFFAN ON THE 13TH



AND BRUCE IS 90 YEARS YOUNG ON THE 13TH



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ALL – MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us, now and forevermore,
Amen**