

## **Easter 2010 part 1**

Have you ever watched a film a second time and been a little bit disappointed? Or have you been back somewhere to eat and it wasn't as special the second time? One of the challenges for Christians is to keep tapping into the sheer enormity and power of Easter. Sometimes it may take time to sink in because everything is familiar\*, we know the story line, we know there is a happy ending.

Part of the awkwardness of that first Easter is shown as we left church on Good Friday in silence. Gill led us in an hour's reflection at the foot of the cross and then instead of going for a cup of tea or coffee in the hall and a nice chat . . .we disbanded in silence. The reality on Good Friday was so much worse – the disciples had fled with only the women remaining with the young John (who was probably seen as no great threat). The depth of their despair then presents the valley bottom to the mountain top joy of Easter Sunday.

In my study I have a framed picture by a Belgian landscape artist. It shows Peter and John at first light making their way to the tomb. Peter is older, of strong build, one of his fisherman hands is half pointing forward with the other holding his chest. The younger John looks racked with anxiety as his hands are clasped to his chest. There is a mixture of emotion in the disciple's faces as they hurry to the tomb. It looks like questions are fizzing through their minds, 'Is this the final insult? His body has been stolen?', 'Is it true, what the women said – is he really alive?'

Can we really grasp the power of that first Easter morning, a harrowing death becomes a mystery to which the disciples can hardly dare believe. . .the tomb is empty. . .Christ is risen?

We now know the full shape of the Easter gospel but if we were watching the lines unfold before our eyes then we more fully appreciate what drama and strain and tension was travelled through with the murderous mistrial that becomes a missing person mystery before showering forth the full power of a victory for all eternity. Christ lived, Christ died, Christ lives forever, risen victorious from the grave hallelujah!

God bless you this Easter as we live out the hope we have through Christ!

Andrew +