

Witness Statements!

Acts 3¹²⁻¹⁹; Psalm 4; 1 John 3¹⁻⁷; Luke 24^{36b-48}

We will be like him for we will see him as he is. (1 John 3³)

Some of us make quite a point of the historical truth of the physical resurrection of Jesus. We do this because it was important to the first apostles. Just look at the readings for today:

- ✦ Peter and John have just been to the Temple and healed a man - that wonderful focus on what people can expect from faith: **I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.** That created a bit of a fuss and Peter needed to explain. Leading up to a call to **repent and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out** Peter explains the events **to which we were all witnesses.** They, collectively, had **released a murderer and rejected the Holy One.** It was all part of what God had planned, the **suffering messiah** and the vindication that when **you killed the author of life, God raised him from the dead.**
- ✦ In Luke we are back with the disciples on the day of resurrection: **they were startled and terrified** when Jesus appeared (a human response). Luke records Jesus' response to the doubts in the minds of the disciples: **touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.** And goes on to the question, **do you have anything to eat?** Again, something ghosts don't do: **they gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate it in their presence.** Again, we have repeated, **you are witnesses of these things.**

But I am aware that for some of us it can seem such a lot of fuss about something that happened 2000 years ago. We can feel a bit like the disciples on that first Easter when it says of them, **in their joy they were disbelieving.** And certainly, however important our Easter faith is to us, we know the dispiriting truth in John's Epistle, where faith is dismissed as irrelevant or a matter of indifference to the world and people around us (who are far too preoccupied with blowing people up, or poisoning them): **the reason the world doesn't know us is that it did not know him.**

Take note, our faith is grounded in the past, but we have a faith that is for today and for tomorrow.

- ✦ For today the challenge is to get to that point that our relationship with God through Christ is so compelling that we achieve the ideal: **all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure and no-one who abides in him sins.** This has always been the deciding factor in whom we worship: the Psalmist says the same thing - **stand in awe and sin not.** If we treat sin seriously that is the most conclusive statement that we aren't pretending to live as 'good' or 'moral' people, but realise that what matters is whether or not our actions offend a holy God: only then can we be **pure,** because only God can make us **pure.**
- ✦ For tomorrow our hope is put simply: **we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.** I am not sure which of these statements is the most exciting! We will be like God! Or **we will see him as he is?**

We may not have witnessed the resurrection, but we should be able to witness the changes that occur in believers in the present and how hope transforms them as they face the future.