

Worship Material
What it means to be Easter people.
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 31st March

Begin with an opening prayer

Living Lord Jesus,
we come to worship in gratitude and joy.
Come to us, dwell with us.
Be with us as we explore the joy
that the story of your risen life brings. **Amen.**

Read Mark 16:1-8

Bible notes

Mark's Gospel moves straight from the burial of Jesus to this account of the discovery of the empty tomb. For the women who discover the tomb, however, two nights have passed, with a whole day in between, of living with the absence of Jesus and the knowledge and witness of his death. The events of this week's reading are experienced in the context of having lived through that 'holy' Saturday. Mark's account is brief, and (except in the longer ending in some versions) without the resurrection appearances recounted in the other Gospels. The resurrection is spoken of, but not witnessed, and so readers are left to draw their own conclusions. However, the missing body suggests that if a resurrection has taken place, then it is a physical one: the same body that died has been raised.

Clearly this account is not the end of the story, as the women, keeping silent through fear, must at some point have spoken out. Their role, however, adds authenticity to the account, given that in that time and culture women were not seen as reliable witnesses so would not have been the means to add credibility to the story. The inclusion of the women, along with the singling out of Peter who had so recently denied Jesus, demonstrates the restorative message of this story, in keeping with what we know of Jesus, but not in a way expected of the longed-for Messiah.

There is a lack of detail and explanation in this account of the empty tomb: the identity of the young man (probably intended as an angel), how the stone was moved, the whereabouts of Jesus, how the message was finally shared. Perhaps living the resurrection, being Easter people, entails trust while living

with questions, uncertainties – all against the backdrop of the reality of Holy Saturday.

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving

Lent and Holy Week is gone, that journey over

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

Maundy Thursday called us to service and devotion.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

Good Friday pained us and stained us and drained us.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

Saturday stopped us in our tracks, reflecting.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

Easter Day brings us resurrection that never will be over.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

Christ is risen for us and within us.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

Beyond the fluffy chicks and Easter eggs there is life in all its fullness.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

In the midst of our joys and delight:

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

In the midst of suffering and pain:

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord

God is with us, God within us.

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to our risen Lord.

Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Easter joy is to be shared,

to be grown, to be treasured.

As we go out into the world and a new week,

may that joy be our strength, our inspiration,

and our refuge in trouble.

Amen.