Easter morning 9th April 2023

Peter’s narrative

(Begin by sitting somewhere, quietly)

I just need some quiet time, to myself. So much has happened, and I just haven’t had a chance to try and make sense of it all. If I can just have time to myself I am sure I can piece everything together.

But so many of us have been together, in this room for so long. It is supposed to be helpful to talk things out, but I just need to hear myself think.

Just as I try and get my head around one thing, someone else asks another question. Emotions are out of control – so confusing. Just whirling and whirling around my head!

It was horrendous to see Jesus crucified. Those wounds that he carried – almost dead as he carried the cross, the flogging had been so brutal. I will never get that image out of my mind.

My friend – more like a brother, but in truth so much more. He was my leader and I was happy to follow him anywhere and everywhere. He had a kingship quality about him, yet never treated us as subjects – definitely friends, and brothers and sisters.

Mourning such a central part of my life was hard enough. I tried to understand why he had to die. He told us, I mean, when I suggested that we escape to somewhere safe and defend him he actually called me Satan! He had spoken many times about such things, having to die – but I didn’t really understand it all. Talking in parables and, well some days seemed like riddles. I think he always wanted us to work things out rather than spoon feed us. Things are more real then, personal and authentic.

When he was with me and the other disciples, it seemed so clear – and then as soon as he was away from us the clouds descended again. How can the truth be so very difficult to grasp!

The visit to the grave should have been clearer than it was, I am sure. The women returned in the morning, breathless and so excited, I could hardly hear what they were saying!: he’s gone, he’s not there – angels speaking – risen – seen Jesus! John and I both ran to the burial site. I know that John arrived first – so much younger than me, a teenager still (although only just!). He hung around outside, but I could not stop myself, just ran in. Those grave clothes neatly folded.

What would anyone have thought? Was it grave robbers – but no, the linen was there, the thing of value.

Was it the Romans who had stolen his body? But why fold the grave clothes? And why would they, it only added to what we, the Jews believed, that Jesus was the Messiah – or IS the Messiah!

I look at the disciples and wonder if any one of them would have done such a thing – to add weight to the claim. I cannot identify any of them that would do that.

And even if I could – the words of Jesus still resonate in my head – that the temple would be destroyed but rebuilt in three days. That must surely have related to this, his death, crucifixion on Friday and then, on Sunday being raised. I can only continue to believe in Jesus and the truth he spoke if the resurrection is real.

But if I really knew him, why did I give any consideration to the other possibilities? Why did I doubt the power of Jesus?

At that point, was I supposed to grieve, question or rejoice?! I did a bit of each if I am honest.

But when Jesus appeared in the room. I mean, just appeared. Not a ghostly appearance despite entering through the locked door, fully embodied, complete with his scars. Was I frightened, yes, but when he said “peace be with you”, well, I felt his presence in full then. My friend was with us again, even ate some fish with us.

But now he has gone again. So, am I supposed to mourn or rejoice? Just when I want to rejoice, I remember! Oh, I always speak without thinking!

On that day, that Friday when he was crucified. People asked me if I knew him, if I had followed him. Some even recognised me from the group – and each time I denied that I knew him.

I denied knowing the best thing that had ever happened to me. I denied the person who had made me live the best life possible for me. All those wonders that I saw, healing and restoration of people. The love that he showed to everyone, bringing out the best in all who truly listened and followed him.

I know that he met with us again – and I know that he forgives – but this was personal to him – not just ignoring God’s laws. I could hardly face him, could not look directly into his eyes. Not because of anything that he had done to me, but because I feel so guilty. He said nothing, spoke to me just as all the others, did not reject me, or avoid me – but MY guilt stopped me from being completely myself I think. Would he have appeared if it had just been me in that room?

As I say, now he is gone again and I have no idea if we will see him again, or where he is. And what does that mean to me, to the others? We cannot replicate what Jesus did, we do not have that authority of God that he had.

Such a lot of unanswered questions.

OK – stop knocking – I’ve finished. Oh for some quiet to make sense of what has happened, to work out what to do going forward. Will I ever know fully what Jesus was trying to do with us, for us, even through us?

Hopefully returning to something that I know how to do well will help. An evening fishing trip. I just hope that some quiet will help me get things in order in my head!

Often we read the accounts in the bible without omitting the things that became clear subsequently. Such as Peter in the room, but still laden with guilt of his denials. We know that later Jesus allows him to declare his love for him three times, but that was later, after the fishing trip.

How confused all the disciples would have been about their circumstances – Peter became established in healing, preaching and growing the Christian church – but he initially returned to fishing.

Some things are answered, but there is still much mystery that surrounds God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Each of us will have questions about things, that often no-one can answer. Parables speak to different people in different ways.

This Easter we are going to plant bulbs that we can take into our homes. As they grow, perhaps slowly and perhaps quickly, may it prompt you to continue to pray for wisdom from God, to be a true believer in the Resurrected Jesus, and be inspired to continue your faith journey through the power of the Holy Spirit. He will reveal your giftings, your part required in his plan.