

John 20.1-18

Further and greater

Christ Church Selly Park

Easter Sunday 9 April 2023

Eastemoji

This morning I'm going to tell the Easter story using emoji – 📖 here it is. Make sense? Shall I sit back down?

📖 Let's break it down and hear how John tells what happened, with a little help from his friends Matthew, Mark and Luke.

📖 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week,

📖 while it was still dark,

📖 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James brought some

📖 herbs and spices that they had prepared to anoint Jesus' body.

They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away

📖 the stone from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large,

📖 had been rolled back and removed from the entrance.

- 】 They were confused and wondered what had happened.
 - 】 They ran back to the disciples and told
 - 】 Peter and John, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!’ The two of them
 - 】 ran to the tomb. John outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the
 - 】 strips of linen lying there – but did not go in. Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped round Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.
- Finally John, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw
- 】 and believed. (But they still
 - 】 did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)
 - 】 So they went back
 - 】 to where they were staying.

§ But Mary was
§ still in the garden, standing outside the tomb,
§ crying her eyes out. As she wept, she bent over
§ to look into the tomb and saw
§ two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at
the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, 'Woman,
§ why are you crying?' 'They have taken my Lord away,' she said,
§ 'and I don't know where they have put him.' At this,
§ she turned round and saw Jesus standing there,
§ but she didn't realise that it was Jesus. He asked her, 'Woman,
§ why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?'
§ Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have carried
him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.'
Jesus said to her,
§ 'Mary.' She turned towards him and cried out,
§ 'Teacher!'

Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

┌ Go instead

┌ to my brothers and tell them.'

┌ So Mary

┌ went to

┌ the disciples with the news,

┌ 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Easter is quite the journey. ┌ Here's the whole of the story we've just heard – I call it *The Eastemoji*.

The disciples' journey

But we can summarise the 📄 disciples' journey – the Eastemoji rollercoaster – to something like this.

📄 Mary and the disciples didn't understand what was going on – in fact they were 📄 totally confused. There were 📄 tears – lots of tears, and they felt a lot like 📄 this. But then they encountered the risen Jesus and 📄 everything changed because of this one truth, the bedrock of our Christian faith: 📄 Jesus is alive!

Jesus' journey

That was their journey – but what about 📄 Jesus' journey? 📄 No-one has 📄 started **higher**, 📄 travelled **further**, 📄 stooped **lower** to 📄 save **more** people from 📄 **worse** danger while giving 📄 a **greater** gift 📄 than Jesus. What a journey – and he did that for *you* and for *me*: he did all that to set *us* free and call *us* into a new family, transformed, made new, alive in him forever.

Your journey?

So the question is... is the risen Jesus part of 📄 *your* journey? The shame and the grief and the pain and the poo emojis of life are real, they are part of everyone's journey... *but they are not the end.*

The resurrection of Jesus shows us there is *more*, that death is *not* the end, that we do not have to be ashamed: not because of how **we** feel (thank goodness – believe me) but because of what **he** has done; not because **we** love God but because **he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins** (1 John 4.10); not because we are better but because **the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in [us]** (Romans 8.11).

For it gets better: the life God offers us is not only about a wonderful *future* but a transformed *today*. Jesus' journey – of life *through* death – is a journey he invites us to live every single day by the power of his Spirit: choosing to follow Jesus and nothing or no-one else; choosing to live his best life for us; refusing to let our pain have the final word; letting his light shine through the cracks of our brokenness. And friends oh, how his light shines!

Don't wait another day – this is your opportunity. Don't stay stuck in your story but respond to *his* invitation to be part of *his* story. If we let go of our old life, full of 'me' and 'mine', if we repent and turn away from our old life, we are facing God and our hands are open ready to receive *his* gift of love, *his* life, which is stronger than death.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! (He is risen indeed, Alleluia!)