



On Easter Day – there is only one Sermon and Sermon message, no matter how it is approached and that is that;

‘Jesus *is* Alive!’

The passage we have today from John’s Gospel takes those mentioned in it from Bereft to Bewildered to Believing...



John starts his narrative of the events with the bereft Mary Magdalene visiting Jesus' tomb.

Why? There are no explanations some suggestions may be;

Jesus' first birth was seen through the eyes of a woman.

His resurrection to life is also seen through the eyes of a woman,

As a woman (one of the same ones) was witness to Jesus' death, so she is witness to His Resurrection.

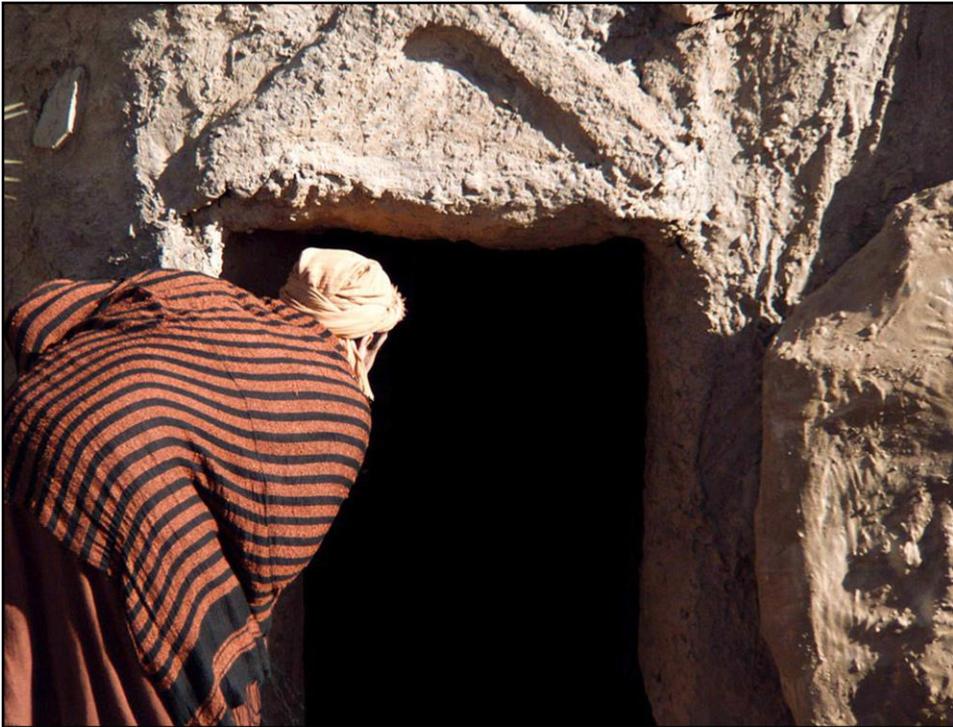
By using Mary's account, John is also esteeming women in the society where their testimony was usually disregarded.



Mary can't keep what she has seen to herself. She ran to tell Peter & John what she had seen – this was no quick walk, light jog – she ran. The emphasis is that she ran as fast as her legs could carry her. Mary tells what has happened and Peter & John then run back to the tomb...in their grief, bereft of their Messiah, Redeemer and Friend they have no real idea what to take as true. Could Mary, a *woman*, have go this right? That may seem an offensive thought to us, but in their society and time it would be a valid question.



Joh outruns Peter – they both stay for an instant at the tomb entrance; then Peter goes in.



John initially stays outside.

Why? Why not rush in like Peter did?

Could it be that in those first moments John was having a wrestle with the Jewish religious teaching that tombs were 'unclean'? Not somewhere that good Jews would enter...

To use a phrase 'he gets over himself' and in he goes to Peter.



Peter moves from being bereft at what he had done in his denial and bereft at the death of Jesus to now utter bewilderment at the linen cloths lying there with the head cloth neatly folded.



When John saw the grave linens from Jesus's body; we are told he believed. John goes straight from bereft to belief.

We can easily miss the point that the passage (written by John) says he, John, believed.

Peter is still bewildered by what has happened... John tells us that 'they did not understand' – John does understand; I think that the 'they' refers to the other disciples as they are recorded as believing until Jesus comes to them again in a room which is likely to have been the Upper Room.



We know what happened; Jesus was resurrected – He had a post resurrection body – **not** the old body fixed up and repaired.

It bore the marks of His crucifixion; but it was not the same as Jesus's former body. With this body, for example Jesus could go through walls, suddenly appear and disappear from sight (John 20:19, Luke 24: 31, 36).

Jesus conquered death and by the example of His own post resurrection body, we have the assurance that beyond death, the new body we will receive will not age or suffer as our

bodies do now.



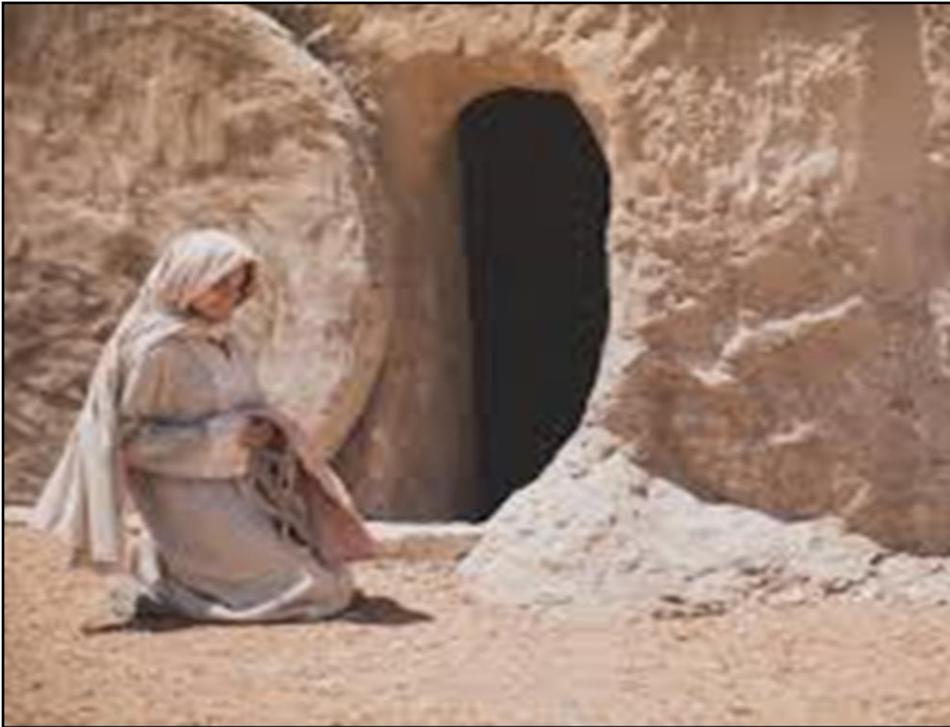
How did it happen?

The 'how' question is one that we or anyone else on Earth ever has, can or will be able to answer.

How God did this is known to Him alone – we know why, when, what and who saw Jesus – not recorded only in the Gospels but in the historical records of the time.

How God did this is where our individual faith in our God of the Impossible takes over.

We do not need to know the 'how' but accept the blessings that are ours because it did happen.



The narrative then switches back to Mary. Peter and John have both gone back home; one still bewildered and one believing. Mary is bewildered for what may have happened and now bereft because she (wrongly) thinks someone has moved the body of Jesus.



She goes in side and there are two angels.

No description so the image is open to artistic interpretation.

Mary is so bereft that she has no fear (The Jews believed that if you saw an angel then you were about to die).

Even more so she then gets into conversation because she is so desperate to find Jesus.



Then she turns around and there's Jesus!  
Whether from early morning sunlight or tears in her eyes Mary just didn't recognise Jesus.  
And the last image she had of Jesus was of his dead, battered and crucified body laid flat in the tomb.  
Again out of her bereft bewilderment she speaks openly to this unknown stranger (not what Jewish woman should be doing), asking, pleading for information.



Then with her name spoken by Jesus comes the moment when being bereft and bewildered is totally blown away and replaced by the unshakeable belief that Jesus is alive.

And that He, Jesus, is standing right in front of her.

Mary in turn acknowledges Jesus – she wants to hold on to him, but instead Jesus commissions Mary to go and tell the eleven disciples – and Jesus now refers to them as ‘brothers’ The death & resurrection of Jesus has brought a change, a new closeness and depth to the relationship between Jesus and his

disciples.



Mary and the disciples moved from bereft, through bewilderment to belief. For some this included a geographical shift to inside the tomb.

So where are you this Easter Day?

Are you like John was at first – stood at the entrance looking in; looking to see if Jesus is still in there? Or you are looking into the empty grave clothes bereft because Jesus isn't there and you don't know why?



Or you with Peter inside the tomb looking at the consequence of Jesus's resurrection – you see the grave clothes but you are bewildered?



Or are you rejoicing in your belief that Jesus is alive?!

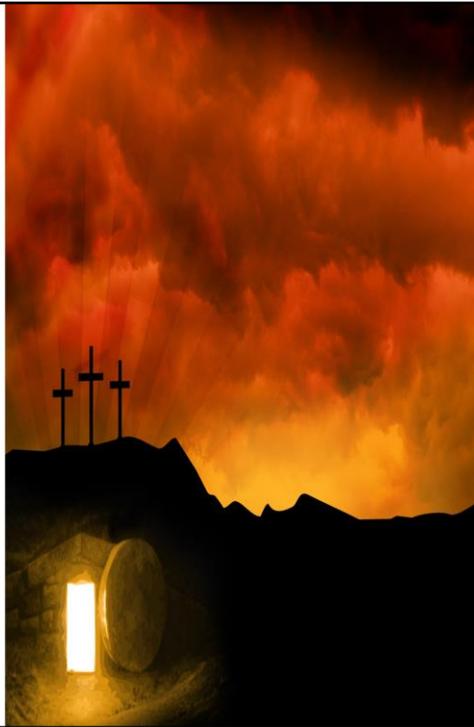
Jesus is not and cannot be found in a tomb – the tomb is empty, Jesus has risen and is now in Heaven interceding on behalf of each of us before our Heavenly Father.

Not the beaten and battered Jesus, but the Messiah, our Redeemer and Friend who reigns on glory because He defeated sin and death once for all and for everyone.

Amen!

Alleluia. Christ  
is risen.

**All: He is  
risen indeed.  
Alleluia.  
Amen!**



Let's say this Easter acclamation again.

If you have never said this before as an acknowledgement of Jesus as your personal Saviour, then make this so now – make this your statement of faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, your Lord.