

Easter 2 – 19 April 2020

Acts 2:14a, 22 – 32

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

²² ‘Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,^[d] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.”^[e]

²⁹ ‘Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had

promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

What can you see in the photograph? 3 (Hooded) vultures. Anything else? Zoom in – can you see the lion under the bush? It was hard to spot – in fact I’d driven past it once – and when we got closer, we saw that there were 2. I was looking out – and saw it because of the vultures – signs of lions.

Peter sees Jesus in the OT Psalm (16:8 – 11), because of the “signs”. Luke (who wrote Acts) tells the story in his Gospel of the risen Jesus meeting 2 disciples on the road to a town called Emmaus, but the disciples did not recognise that it was Jesus. They told him all about the crucifixion and that some of the disciples had said that Jesus was risen, but they themselves didn’t know what to believe. Luke tells us that “**beginning with Moses and all of the Prophets, [Jesus] explained what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself**” (Luke 24:27).

It’s clear that Jesus told the rest of the disciples these things as well – and Peter had learned to see Jesus in the OT. A big sign that we

get here is King David. Many things about David in the Bible also tell us about Jesus, because God made a promise to David that one of his descendants would be King for ever. Peter tells the crowd here that David was talking about Jesus in Psalm 16 when he says: **“you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your Holy One see decay”** (v27). He goes on to say that in fulfilment of this **“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.”** (v32) And it is true today – Jesus is alive and we are witnesses of that.

Sometimes, for us, it can be hard to see Jesus. At the moment, with so much sickness, and with many people dying from Covid-19 around the world, with the restrictions on what we can do, with the uncertainty about the economy and so much more, it's not easy to see Jesus. But that doesn't mean he's not here.

What are the signs that Jesus is here?

1. The Bible – read it and see him
2. Prayer – as we speak to him, we can know his presence
3. In the quiet of isolation – we are not alone
4. In others – the kindness of neighbours, the thankfulness of those we are able to help, the

abundance of the response to Captain Tom Moore (who's raised £18m by Friday morning)

Be encouraged. Jesus is risen! And he is with us now. May we, in our reading, prayers, lives and action, see him and show him to others. As Peter said: **God has raised Jesus to life, and we are witnesses of it.**

So let us all be witnesses, knowing him ourselves and telling others about him. Amen.

Collect for the 2nd Sunday of Easter:

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father.
Amen.