

Sermon Easter 3 2015 LCA

Before we have communion we will join in the familiar peace greeting, and then we will share the peace between us. We are repeating this action of Jesus when he says “Peace be with you” to his disciples after the resurrection. Of course, for the Jews this wasn’t an unfamiliar greeting; “Shalom” the Hebrew word for peace, like the Arabic greeting “Salaam”. It has however caused controversy in parts of the Church of England.

But let us stop for awhile, go back into that Gospel reading, think it through in silence, try to imagine yourself as one of those disciples. You had been through a terrible time, Jesus was dead, you were confused, frightened for your life, grief stricken, guilty, perhaps even angry. Then you heard the body was missing, then strange stories of people having seen him.

Silence

And now, he is there standing amongst them, offering to be touched, wanting to eat fish. Imagine that room, that scene, try and live it.

Use senses of smell, hearing, touch as well as sight. Is it warm in the room? Is it smelly? What are the noises coming in from outside?

Silence

And then, that familiar face, that familiar voice, different emotions now perhaps. He is most definitely not a ghost, no ghost can be touched, can eat fish. *Silence*

This is a new form of reality, the Resurrection reality. Jesus has gone through death and out the other side, into a new way of life, with a transformed body that can be in both earth’s space and God’s space. John says that there are not words to describe this, but we will be like Jesus, this is the power of the Resurrection, sin may still be a possibility for us, but it is not our habitual state.

The power of God, through the Holy Spirit healed the cripple, and can heal us, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually, the pain caused by our sin can be healed, our God is a powerful, loving, merciful God. How do we get healed? We take ourselves to God and

ask, there are so many examples of this in the New Testament, of people having just enough faith to ask, to touch, to be near.

We could also take ourselves to other Christians who, by prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, can ask God for healing on our behalf. God's healing, through the followers of Christ is also well documented.

Christ has died for us so that we can be free, free of the fear of death, of sin, of separation from God. He came amongst his disciples and said "Peace be with you". Of course, in this world we live in peace can be hard to find. Peace in ourselves, our families, in the world. Worst of all at demonstrating Christ's peace is his church. We argue, we fall out, between denominations, churches and within churches and so set a very poor example, of the loving, forgiving relationships we are supposed to live. We pray; 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others', we are told by Jesus to love one another as he has loved us, each and every

guilty, flawed one of us. We must try harder if we are truly meaning what we say each week.

And so, when we come to the peace, remember, we are echoing Jesus's words, the words the risen Christ used to his disciples. We are declaring our faith in his promise that where two or three are gathered together he will be amongst us. We recognise that Jesus stands here with us as we worship, that he will bring peace into our troubled lives, and he may use our fellow Christians to do it. He is here, feel the joy, the amazement and worship the King of Kings.