



Easter Sunday

John 20:1-18

What did you expect when you arrived this morning? I expect you were looking for an Easter Sunday service. Well, you got one, but with a few things you didn't expect – someone moving furniture, “the wrong” slides appearing, potatoes in the birthday box.

The ladies that went to visit the tomb were very sad. Jesus had been killed two days ago and they were very sad. He had to be buried quickly on the Friday and they were not allowed to go to the tomb until the Sunday. They wanted to put some spices on His dead body as a last act of devotion.

So what did they expect. They expected to see a stone rolled across the grave. They expected to see Roman guards and they expected to see the body of Jesus lying in the grave. The only problem was, who was going to shift the stone. Hopefully the guards would help maybe?

They expected to deal with a dead body. After all, when you're dead, you're dead.

What did they get? Here's what. The stone was rolled away, the guards were nowhere to be seen and the grave was empty. It left them scratching their heads. You heard the rest of the story. The women tell the disciples who also investigate and then Mary meets Jesus alive. Can you imagine the shock – probably like our strange lady this morning. Jesus was alive! And He was speaking her name! Wow! Now THAT was a surprise! And Jesus went on to surprise over 500 other people too.

So what did you expect from this Easter – easter eggs? easter bunnies? hearing a familiar story? expecting to see re-runs of your fave films on telly? Or do you want to be surprised?

Surprised? Actually my surprises have mostly been nice this morning. God wants to surprise you today. You see, Jesus rose from the dead and that's how He stayed. And he wants to meet up with you this Easter.

You see, if He's alive He's always there

He's somebody who is calling you by name – He wants to know you

He is someone who gives life – He wants to be part of yours. That's why He died. He died so he could take the penalty for my sins and yours. This means we can know Him and be with Him forever.

But if we want to know Him and know Him with us then we've got to be prepared to come before Him and say we are sorry for our sins and decide to follow Him and do what He says – then He'll forgive us, come into our lives. Following Jesus is just amazing.

Perhaps you've done that – then this is a reminder to you that this isn't a dead story – Jesus is alive and wants you to know He's always there in the good times and the difficult times. He knows you personally and He brings life into every situation we entrust to Him.

So let Jesus into your life or back into your life this Easter. Be surprised and be amazed by Him!

*Talk by Mark Reid 23/3/08
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Most of this was an implementation of the Easter Sunday Service in Tim Storey's DIY Guide to All-Age Worship, Kevin Mayhew, 2002 p67