



3rd Sunday of Easter Biv
Excerpts From Acts 3, 1 John 2, Luke 24

New World

The resurrection of Jesus ushered in a new world. Our job is to live in it, and to announce to others it's here.

Fr David King – 18th April 2021

Please read the Gospel reading before looking at this (Luke 24.35-48)

1. Tony

On Wednesday of this week, I was in the car and I had a little journey to make so I turned on the radio and on came this incredible programme which had me on tenterhooks right from the start. It was about this guy called Tony and all the life-changing stuff he had experience. Twenty years ago he was working in a bar and the world cup was on, and his friend mentioned that he was going down the bookies to place a bet on one of the games. Tony had never done this before, so he said he would come too and he did.

- He ended up placing a £1 bet on a really obscure outcome – it was for one guy to score first and then the other team to win 2-1. That night he was working in the bar and the game was on, and miraculously the player he had chosen *did* score first, and suddenly Tony was engaged and excited about the game in a whole new way. He told everyone that he had a bet on this game and soon the whole bar was rooting for him and amazingly the team did win 2-1 and in this euphoric moment Tony felt ecstatic, he'd won £50 from a £1 bet. And, of course, he should have stopped there, it was just a lucky win. But he didn't. He started betting more frequently, and with higher stakes, and soon he was hooked.
- Now, as this poor guy was telling his story on the radio, I began to feel a bit panicky just listening to it, what it must have been like to live it I just don't know. Soon he was stealing money from work and lying to his fiancé and the whole thing was getting totally out of hand. And all the time he was desperately trying to win back all the money he'd lost, which just made things even worse of course. And he spoke about how, when his daughter was born, he was in the bathroom next door retching with the stress of having these huge debts to pay and this addiction hidden and locked away from everyone. Nobody knew, and he felt totally alone.
- To cut a long and dramatic story short, this went on for ten years until Tony found himself hundreds of thousands in debt and when the auditors came to his work place he knew the game was up. He ran away and booked into this little hotel in the middle of nowhere and thought about how he had lied to everyone, and stolen, and been an awful Dad to his daughter, and he thought about taking his life there and then. After a while there was a knock on the door, and it was the police.
- In that next two hours, it just all poured out to the police, he fessed up to the whole story. And he spoke on the radio about how it was such a relief to share it. He didn't have to lie any more. Tony went to prison, got some help with his addiction, he served his time.
- But, thankfully, this difficult story has a hopeful ending. Now he is out, he hasn't placed a bet in ten years, he works as a gambling counsellor to young people, and he is still in touch with his daughter. He left that old life behind and started a new one...and maybe there is something of Easter in that story.

2. Jesus

- This is a lovely time actually, these days of Eastertide, we just gently get to unpack the resurrection and take a look at all that it means for our lives. And today we're going to look at the new world that the resurrection opens up for each one of us. But to get to that new world, it's vital to remember what Jesus was here to do.
- Through the bible God consistently promises his people that someone will come, who was going to free the world from all the death, darkness and decay that had entered the world in the fall. And he was going to do that by establishing God's kingdom on earth and banishing these things by doing battle with them and defeating them.
- The early Christians saw Jesus as the fulfilment of all these prophecies of course. And this totally explains their joy at the resurrection. You see Jesus' death with *no* resurrection meant he was just another fraudulent failed Messiah. It was all over. He clearly wasn't the one to rescue creation. But Jesus coming back, or rather, going on *through* death and out the other side, was something completely different. This was proof he *was* the Messiah! If he's alive, the plan must have worked, he must have defeated evil and rescued creation, and he must be now reigning as the world's true Lord! Of course they were overjoyed!
- Right, *now* we get a little glimpse into the new world Jesus' resurrection opened up. The old world order of human pride and retribution was no longer the only thing on the menu. There was now a new way to live free from the clutches of darkness and decay, a way of forgiveness and reconciliation, a way of healing and hope; Jesus' way! Welcome to Jesus' new world where he reigns as Lord! This is what Easter is about; living in this new world through allowing the Spirit of the risen Jesus to live in us, as we live as his disciples.

3. David

- But our job is not *just* to live in this new world. In the Gospel, when talking to the disciples and filling them in on everything that they haven't fully grasped yet, Jesus says that now 'repentance and the forgiveness of sins' is to be preached to all nations. That's their job.
- Now, *we* hear that and we think it sounds a bit dull, until we understand what Jesus really means. What he's asking them to do is go and announce that this new world has arrived, a world in which a new way is possible (that's what repentance is), a world in which forgiveness abounds, a world in which the Holy Spirit can inspire and empower us to sit down at table with those that previously it would have been unthinkable to do so with. That's their job, and it's ours too.
- There is so much more to be said about all this, we see this new world spring into being in the book of Acts, with the disciples healing and forgiving and completely re-ordering the social hierarchy of the day, but for today in essence the message is clear, and as ever there is so much good news.
- Jesus is saying that because of the resurrection a new world has arrived, a world in which (with sin and death defeated) we can find forgiveness and a new start, a world in which there is goodness, truth and love, a world that is not yet fully present, though in time will be, a world in which he reigns as Lord. Our job is to live in it, and to announce to others that it is here and they can live in it too.

Jesus, pour out your Holy Spirit on me, that I may live in this new world, and call others to do the same.