



**Read the Archbishop's sermon preached at the Easter Sunday Eucharist at Canterbury Cathedral this morning.**

*As delivered:*

Come Holy Spirit and set our hearts on fire with the flame of your love. Amen.

In each of our lives there are moments which change us forever. Sometimes it's individual. We have watched, sympathised with and felt alongside the dignity of the King and the Princess of Wales as they have talked of their cancer – and in doing so, by their lack of selfishness, by their grace and their faith, boosted so many others.

Sometimes the events which change our lives are those which come internationally. A pastor in Kyiv told me of the moment he heard the Russian helicopters clattering over his house in 2022. He knew his life, his country's future, had all been altered once for all, and nothing could be the same again.

In all these cases we pray – for the Royal family, for so many places.

When Jesus' life ended so did the lives of many other people. His mother Mary, Salome and Mary Magdalene were among them. The reason they go to his grave early on this Sunday morning is to spend time preparing his corpse for its final resting place. What they encountered changed their world: "He has been raised; He is not here." They are perplexed, terrified. Every assumption no longer holds water, whether about God, about Jesus, about life and death itself. Jesus is God and when we look at Jesus we see the very nature of God.

"He has been raised, he is not here." God is the victor over death, even his own death, in Jesus. Death is conquered.

Everything changed. The universe shifted to a new mode of living.

And so our understanding of Jesus must change: he was not just a great teacher or a good man, but God revealing God. The one they knew had been raised from death.

How we see the world must change; how we see our purpose in this changed world must change, for God came as baby, making room for us to ignore him. God lived a fully human life, in obscurity. He was crucified, bearing on his shoulders the cost of all human sin and failure, and God died for our sins, unseen by most. Now we can be forgiven all our wrongdoing. God is humble and in love reveals himself to us with the choice of accepting him in faith or living with our own wisdom. God exists; we must deal with God's reality.

God suffers for his love-in-action. The changed world is one in which the greatest darkness is overcome at the highest price: the crucified God.

We will suffer in our broken world, because God did, but God's life is always stronger than the worst of this world. That is Christian belief. It calls all of us, each of us, to courageous action in changed lives and changed world and changed understanding of God.

We must confront evil and pain. Whether it is the evil of people smugglers, or county lines in our schools, or the pain and suffering in a family riven with grief or rage or substance abuse; Jesus, the God-man, who experienced every pain and temptation, is calling you and me to love-in-action. Action driven by prayer, directed in wisdom.

The church is not party political, for its members are all different in our party politics. But the church does not pick causes by opinion polls or human pressure: we show love-in-action and word because of who God is, revealed in Jesus. We act because of what God says, found in the Bible and lived out by the church.

Today in England in over 30,000 social projects, in 8,000 food banks, we proclaim the righteousness of God who acts for the poor and vulnerable, for the rich and comfortable, with love and perfect justice for all, good and bad.

Nothing in this world will stop us seeking to obey God faithfully, whatever the ridicule, the price or the result, for Christ is risen and He will be our final and perfect judge.

Therefore, let us seek action amongst the starving children of Gaza and Sudan, and the parents who desperately try to find food for them; action the hostages held by Hamas; for those in the trenches and cities and fears of Ukraine; in at least 30 but probably closer to 50 other places of armed conflict; action for the 25 – 30% of children in this country in poverty.

God is revealed in Jesus, so action-in-love means we must live sacrificially and generously, for others not for ourselves. We accept that suffering is normal, for it was normal for Jesus. We accept generosity is necessary because God's generous gift was giving his Son, Jesus, so that we might have eternal life.

The result of sacrifice and generosity is to be like Jesus in his resurrection as we are like Jesus in his suffering. St Paul puts it perfectly: "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

We carry in words and actions the good news of Jesus, for we have the news of death conquered.

The resurrection is God-shaped, God-sized. It is literally a new creation that sets the whole of what exists, especially our lives, on a path of purpose and hope, whatever evil deeds or times will confront us in the next few years.

God has done everything necessary about everything evil – even death. Eternal life is God's gift to be grasped by every person, society, nation and place. God says to each of us: "Choose life from God's hands through faith in Jesus Christ, who is God crucified, God resurrected." Amen.—

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