

Easter Day Dialogue

Two women are talking as if in conversation with an unseen interviewer. They talk almost as much to themselves as to the interviewer. They should nod and interact with each other like two good friends would if recounting a tale to a third party. They should be dressed simply, as if from no particular era, or just as ordinary people from the congregation.

A: In some ways it was silly going there, worse than silly – stupid, dangerous even. What we thought we'd do there I don't know. Well, we knew what we wanted to do but how we would manage it was another thing.

B: What she means is that we wanted to see the body and prepare it properly. We wanted to do what was right. Normally it would be done fairly soon after... well, shortly after the person had passed away. But with all the trouble, and with him being such a famous person, that was impossible.

A: And then it was the Sabbath. You can't do stuff like that on the Sabbath, so we had to leave him for a while.

B: Well we wouldn't have left him if we'd had a choice, would we? Like I said, because of all the trouble with the authorities things weren't normal and we didn't know what they were going to do with the body. Not that we know what happens to crucified bodies in normal circumstances. We've never had dealings with that sort of person before. We're very respectable. Anyway the word went round that someone was going to take the body away.

A: Then we heard that it was one of the council leaders who had asked for the body and as they were the ones who had stirred up so much bother in the first place we were worried about what he was going to do with it.

B: You see they had wanted him out of the way, so maybe they thought that the body should be disposed of before any of his friends and followers got it.

A: Gradually we realised that the man taking the body was, well, if not one of us, then he was at least sympathetic. We watched from a distance and he treated the body carefully and with respect. He wrapped it in a linen cloth and he took it to a tomb. There were soldiers with him and when they had put Jesus inside they rolled a huge boulder across the entrance, which is why I said that I don't know how we thought we were going to prepare the body. There was no way we could get near it!

B: Once the Sabbath was over, a group of us collected all the necessary oils and cloths and so on, and we went back to the tomb. I think Joanna was hoping that the man would be there, or maybe that there might be some soldiers who we could ask to move the boulder for us.

A: I'm not sure I would have wanted to ask *soldiers* for help.

B: Surely they wouldn't harm a group of women, only wanting to look after their dead?

A: Well, it's irrelevant now, because when we got there the rock had already been moved. We could tell that from quite some distance.

B: We couldn't believe that someone else had rolled the stone away. Why would they? We approached carefully. We decided that the man must have been tending the body himself, or found some women to do it, but if there were soldiers around we didn't want to get ourselves in trouble.

A: We sort of coughed and shuffled a bit as we got near to the entrance. We didn't want to startle whoever was inside.

B: But it was us who got a shock. The tomb was empty and the body had gone! We were so upset. After following the man to find the place and preparing and everything, someone had moved his body and we didn't know where they had taken it. We didn't know how we'd find Jesus now. For some of us it was just too much to bear. We cried a little and hugged each other.

A: Then as we turned to go back out we saw two men, or at least they looked like men, but they had a sort of bright light all around them. (*Pause.*) I found them pretty scary.

B: They spoke to us and asked us why we were looking in a place where the dead lie for someone who is alive.

A: They reminded us of what Jesus had said; that he would be handed over to sinful men, crucified and rise to life again on the third day. It didn't make sense at the time, although now... Well, it had to be true.

B: We were really thrilled. To think that what he had said had come true – that he wasn't dead any more. It was incredible!

A: We were so thrilled we ran back to the house to tell the others. We couldn't wait to tell them the good news. But I have to say they thought we'd gone mad. I'm sure they thought we were just a group of hysterical women who'd gone to the wrong place, or imagined something in the dim light.

B: Peter ran off to look, though. I'm not sure if he wanted to prove us wrong or if he just had to see for himself. Either way, when he came back he said that he was amazed, that all he could see were the cloths lying on the ground.

A: So you can see why we are so certain that he is alive. And to think that at first I had thought we were making a useless journey because I didn't know how we were going to open the tomb. (*Shakes head and shrugs.*) How little I know of what he can do ...

The above, read by Revd Jane Stephenson and Sue Collins, is the introduction to the following by:

Revd Canon Judy Hunt ...

Luke 24: 1 – 12

'How little I know of what he can do'

That last phrase: "**How little I know of what he can do**" ...

What a realisation ... this woman had spent so much time with Jesus in the past three years. She'd heard his teaching, she had witnessed his miracles ... and yet – his resurrection still blew her assumptions sky high:

How little I know of what he can do

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In her life that followed – this realisation would be so important – in a positive way. She and the other followers of Jesus were entering uncharted waters ... they were going to face challenges that they could never have imagined would come their way – but because of the resurrection – they knew that nothing could permanently defeat the power of God's love and the reach of God's love. They began to know and experience more and more of what the risen Christ could do.

In the challenges that face us in 2022 – whether global, national, community based or individual – I invite us all – I invite us each – to take this phrase with us into the future: **How little I know of what Jesus can do** – and to take it as a reality that gives us hope.

To quote some words from St Paul with which to finish:

'Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.'

Ephesians 3: 20 - 21