

Achterarder Parish Church
Lent Study Notes 2023

Mark's Gospel



Mark's Gospel

Our challenge is to read and pray with Mark's Gospel in the 40 days before Easter. Take time each day when you will be undisturbed, comfortable, and not rushed! 15 minutes will usually be enough, a little more for longer readings.

Finding the time is the hardest part of the challenge. If you miss a day, don't pack it in, just do the reading for the day you are on and continue from there.

Suggested guidelines for how you structure this time with God are very simple and you will find what works for you. The basic pattern is: time to become still and focus on God, read the Gospel and think about it, time to pray about your reading, then to pray for others. Reading and prayer are equally important.

To read the whole Gospel in 40 days, some readings are longer and have several points to ponder after them. There is no need to "do" them all - choose what most speaks to you. If you don't find the notes helpful, don't use them. The most important thing is to read the Gospel passage for the day and think about what it is saying to you.

Guidelines

The Presence of God

I pause for a moment and reflect on God's life-giving presence in every part of my body, in everything around me, in the whole of my life.

The Word

God speaks to each of us individually. I need to listen to what he is saying to me. (Please turn to your scripture on the following pages. Inspiration points are there should you need them).

Conversation

How has God's Word moved me? Has it left me cold? Has it consoled me or moved me to act in a new way? I imagine Jesus standing or sitting beside me, I turn and share my feelings with him.

Conclusion

I bring to Jesus my desires for other people and for the world around me.

I praise Him that He listens to me, and knows each situation.

Monday 27th February

Mark 1:1-20

"The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way — a voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

Mark's Gospel is fast moving and many little stories run one after another. When Jesus began his ministry John the Baptist had already done the groundwork. John's role was to "prepare the way", to get the world ready for God's Saviour.

Jesus is baptised by John to identify with us. He also begins to preach with a clear message, "Repent" (turn back to God), and he calls people to follow him.

Can I remember how I was first called to follow Jesus? In what way is He calling me today?

Tuesday 28th February

Mark 1:21-45

After many healings, next morning while it was still dark, Jesus left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" (presumably more people wanting healing). Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

God wants to spend time with us where we can talk and listen to Him. Jesus had to work to find space and time to pray. Doing that gave him a strong sense of his priorities. We may be surprised that Jesus made preaching a stronger priority than healing.

Do I find it difficult to pray, make time to pray or know how to have time with God?

What is God's priority for me to do just now?

Wednesday 1st March

Mark 2:1-12

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Jesus loves people. He cares for them body, mind and spirit. The paralyzed man was brought by his friends because they believed Jesus could change his life.

What Jesus did for the man was astonishing. He forgave his inner dis-ease and also healed his body. God wants to make people whole, and Jesus touches every aspect of our lives: body, mind and spirit.

What practical things can we do for our friends who are in need, and so bring them to Jesus? We can also bring people to Jesus by praying for them.

Thursday 2nd March
Mark 2:13-28

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Jesus' choice of people to hang out with made the leaders criticize him. The leaders had a hold over people, trying to make them do things their way without question. Jesus' message to them and us is about a living relationship with God, not empty rules and rituals. The shocking bit of Jesus' message was that everyone could be part of it, even those excluded from the religious club.

*Why might people think that God and the Church is not for them?
How can they be included?*

Friday 3rd March
Mark 3:1-19

"Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him."

Crowds of people followed Jesus, no doubt for many different reasons. Yet He called twelve to follow him as disciples, moulding their whole lives around himself and his teaching. They were a mixed bunch without any special qualifications - except being willing to take the step of faith.

In the new Jesus-centred faith movement, people are called because they are loved, not because of their qualifications. Help me also to love the other people in my church, even if they are not who I would have chosen.

Saturday 4th March

Mark 3:20-35

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

When members of our family don't share our Christian faith, sometimes it can be quite stressful. Jesus' family hadn't come to terms with who he was and what he was doing. They thought he was mad! In our increasingly secular society people of faith can seem quite weird. Jesus understands that it's not easy being different. Jesus also tells us that there is a bad spirit which is actively opposed to Him.

What or who discourages me from following Jesus? Where am I aware of a conflict between forces of good and evil?

Monday 6th March

Mark 4:1-29

"The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, the evil one comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

In Jesus' society, farming was something people would understand. This parable takes an everyday practice and give it a deep spiritual meaning. His words are the seed and the soil is our heart. Jesus wants our lives to "produce fruit" for him, something that feeds and benefits both ourselves and others.

Which kind of soil is most like me? What might be the fruit God will use me to produce?

Tuesday 7th March

Mark 4:30-41

"He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

When Jesus calmed the storm he left his disciples in a state of shock. They had thought they were going to die because of the storm. We read this story knowing the outcome, but they lived through it not knowing how it was going to work out for them. His answer to their cries was real and revealed something about Jesus' identity which would change their view of him forever. He could control nature ...surely only God can do that?

What are the storms around me in the world today, in my friends and family? Are there storms within me? Can I hear Jesus say, "Peace, be still?"

Wednesday 8th March

Mark 5:1-20

"Jesus said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."

In the ancient world it was commonplace to attribute all sorts of conditions and illnesses to demon possession. The Bible echoes this understanding through various encounters Jesus has with individuals who are suffering. Whether we would describe their suffering in those terms today is hard to say. The important point is that there is a bad spirit which works to destroy human integration ("we are many"). Jesus has power over evil, to bring healing and wholeness. At the end of this encounter Jesus restores the man to himself, his family and his community.

Perhaps I, or someone I know, feels torn between conflicting loyalties or competing priorities. Ask God for the harmony that comes from knowing who He has made me and called me to be.

Thursday 9th March

Mark 5:21-43

"A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering."

The woman who touched the hem of Jesus' cloak is a remarkable example of desperation and faith. Her money was gone and so was her hope of a cure - almost. Jesus was her last chance. She must have fought hard to get near Jesus to touch his cloak. Life makes us desperate at times, but it also makes us abandon the unhelpfully polite nature of religion and reach for the heart of God our Father. Jairus, too, was desperate. He must have been impatient that Jesus turned aside to deal with someone else while his dying child waited.

We can be raw and honest in bringing our needs to God - we don't have to put on a polite face. Perhaps we also need faith to know that He will answer, even when it looks impossible.

Friday 10th March

Mark 6:1-13

"Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits."

Imagine how it must have felt for the disciples to be sent away from Jesus, to do his work without his physical presence for the first time. They must have been nervous about whether they could do it, whether they were good enough or would be laughed at. Sending them in twos was a good principle. It was all essential training for what was to come.

Might God be sending me out in a new way, challenging me beyond my comfort zone? How can other Christians be a help to me?

Saturday 11th March

Mark 6:14-44

"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand."

The disciples see a need and know their own resources are not enough to meet it. So, they take the little that they have and give it not to the hungry people, but to Jesus. In Jesus' hands, it becomes enough. He multiplies their gift, making it more effective than they could possibly have imagined.

Lord, forgive me when I'm paralysed by needs in the world or the Church that I can't possibly meet. Instead, help me to give what I have, however small, for you to use. You will do the rest.

Monday 13th March

Mark 6:45-56

"Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and Jesus was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were terrified."

There are a few puzzles here. Why does Jesus wait until the fourth watch - almost all night - before going out to help them? Why, having done that, does he go to walk past them? It's reassuringly human that the disciples' reaction was the same as ours would surely be - they were terrified! Yet when they invited Jesus into their place of crisis, it became a place of peace.

Is there a problem or situation that I'm trying to tackle alone, believing that Jesus is absent or just watching from a distance? He may be closer than I think, waiting to be invited in.

Tuesday 14th March

Mark 7:1-23

"These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'

Jesus saves his harshest criticism for people who go through the rituals of faith but their hearts are untouched. It may look impressive but it doesn't impress God! Probably all of us are guilty of putting on our best faces and hiding our worst thoughts. Eventually, Jesus says, what's really inside will show itself in our words or deeds. We need heart surgery, a change from the inside out.

"Search me O God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)

Wednesday 15th March

Mark 7:24-37

"After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly."

There are many accounts of healing in the Gospels, but no two are identical. Jesus treats every person as a unique individual. This is one of the more unusual healings, using fingers, tongue and spittle. It may not have been quite what his friends had in mind, but it did the job.

Jesus still often surprises us by answering our prayers, but not in the way we expected.

Lord, forgive me for limiting you by trying to be you. Help me to release my prayers to you so that your creative Spirit can respond to them as you choose.

Thursday 16th March

Mark 8:1-21

Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

It's reassuring that the disciples were often slow to understand what Jesus was about. He had to do the same things and teach the same lessons more than once. Perhaps they didn't really grasp it until after the Resurrection, when the whole picture became clear.

We also needn't be ashamed to be lifelong learners in following Jesus, or to admit there are things we don't understand. The deepest truths take a while to unfold, and there are always new things to learn.

Jesus taught us to pray, Give us this day our daily bread. What gift or grace do I need from God today? And what might I ask for someone else?

What bits of Christian teaching do I need to revisit most, to gain better understanding?

Friday 17th March

Mark 8:22-38

"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny herself and take up her cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save her life will lose it, but whoever loses her life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit her soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for her soul?"

Jesus' thoughts begin to turn to the culmination of his life and ministry. He makes the connection between his sacrificial love and our sacrificial living as his followers. In a world where people are often judged by possessions he asks us to be free from their hold and desire. When we make it our goal to have things, we don't always realise that things actually have us.

Lord, this is a real challenge. Show me that I find my true fulfillment not in getting things for me but in doing things for you. Then I am fully alive.

Saturday 18th March

Mark 9:1-13

"After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus."

This was another opportunity for some of Jesus' disciples to gain insight into his divine nature. For a moment Peter, James and John saw Jesus as no-one had seen him before. This outwardly ordinary man literally outshone even the greatest of the Old Testament saints.

Is my mental concept of Jesus too human and ordinary to have much of God about it? Or do I think of him as so exceptional that I struggle with his humanity? God made flesh is a mysterious and wonderful balance.

Monday 20th March

Mark 9:14-37

"Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

Again, the disciples are not at their best or brightest. They've been arguing about who's the greatest disciple and who deserves the privileged place. Most of us are a bit more subtle about it, but we do

compare ourselves with others. We get irritated or offended if someone is treated better than us, or better than we think they should be. Jesus' example of servanthood shows how we can value both ourselves and others in the right way.

What are the challenges for me in developing a servant attitude? Is it other people's opinion of me? Pride? Or fear of being exploited, seeming to be a doormat? I can talk to Jesus about that.

Tuesday 21st March
Mark 9:38-50

"Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose his reward."

There are always those who belong to our circle and those who don't. Christian denominations have been quick to draw the lines and defend them, mistrusting outsiders. In this intriguing passage Jesus seems to say that what matters is that people genuinely believe in His name and act sincerely from that motivation. Everyone who does so is on the same side, regardless of other differences.

Let me look for opportunities to be a blessing to others today. Find a practical way to demonstrate God's love to someone.

Wednesday 22nd March
Mark 10:1-16

"People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on them and blessed them."

The laughter and life of children in a Church is a wonderful thing. If you want silence, go to a graveyard! Jesus also says there are childlike qualities we must have to be able to enter His Kingdom - perhaps humility, or simple trust. The door is too small for people who think they're big.

Father God, in your eyes I will never be anything more or less than your loved and forgiven child. That is my privilege and honour.

Thursday 23rd March
Mark 10:17-31

"Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

This incident would shock Jesus' listeners because in those days, wealth was seen as a sign of God's favour. This young man would be seen as a "catch" for Jesus, a wealthy and influential follower. Jesus identifies wealth as a spiritual snare: the love of money deflects people from pursuing God's priorities. Yet, Jesus looks at him with love.

What might I have to give up to enter more fully into the "life in all its fullness" that God wants for me? Help me to see Jesus' compassionate gaze if I'm struggling.

Friday 24th March
Mark 10:32-52

"Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

In today's reading Jesus twice says to someone, "What do you want me to do for you?" (36, 51). The disciples demand that Jesus fulfil their wishes for glory. The blind man wants to be healed. Jesus refuses one request and meets the other. Why?

Jesus says to me, What do you want me to do for you? I can ask confidently, knowing He will only give me what is good for me.

Saturday 25th March
Mark 11:1-11

"Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

The crowds who greeted Jesus believed that they were seeing the coming of God's kingdom. They were right - but not in the way they expected. God's plan to bring the Kingdom was far more comprehensive than they could have imagined - and more difficult.

Where can I see encouraging signs today of God's kingdom at work around me, maybe in unexpected places? How can I work with God to help it fully come?

Monday 27th March

Mark 11:12-33

"While Jesus was walking in the Temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you authority to do them?"

Jesus sees the Temple as his Father's house - it has been his spiritual home since he was a child (Luke 2:49).

He cannot stand it being used for commerce, or for rituals that keep people out instead of welcoming them.

His authority to take matters into his own hands can only come from his identity as the Son of God.

How do we use our church buildings? In ways that welcome people? Is there anything we can't or shouldn't do because it dishonours God?

Tuesday 28th March

Mark 12:1-17

"Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?"

Again they try to catch Jesus out over a controversial issue. How do Christians relate to the state authorities? In parts of today's world Christians are persecuted and discriminated against. Their answer to that question would be different to ours. In Jesus' day the divisive question was whether they should pay taxes to their Roman oppressors. Jesus' answer is brilliant.

Give thanks for the freedom we live in, especially freedom to practice our faith. And pray for our fellow Christians who suffer in ways we can't imagine.

Wednesday 29th March

Mark 12:18-44

"Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all the others.

They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

We are each responsible to steward our resources in a way that honours God and reflects our gratitude to Him. Everything we have is a gift. So, how much should we give back? In the Old Testament people gave one tenth to the Lord, and many Christians still use that guideline. Others, like this woman, give more. The wealthiest people are not always the most generous in spirit.

*"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
(2 Corinthians 9:7) Lord, help me to give joyfully!*

Thursday 30th March Mark 13

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: he leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore, keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back."

This is a difficult chapter. Jesus is predicting a time when his followers would be persecuted and scattered (this happened around AD70). He is also predicting the end of the world, when he will come again.

We can feel hopeless with all the sin and brokenness in the world. Yet we pray, "Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven" and believe that prayer will be answered one day.

We don't know all the details about the end of the world. How can we watch, work and wait for God's Kingdom, and not lose hope?

Friday 31st March

Mark 14:1-11

"While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head."

Needless extravagance is wasteful, and Jesus is not encouraging that. However, this is a very special gift: oil for a marriage as a sign of love, anointing as a sign of death, given freely as an act of adoration at exactly the right symbolic moment in Jesus' life. It is perfect. Yet this seems to be the last straw for Judas - why?

So often I come to God with my problems and needs - and that's fine. Sometimes, I just need to find ways of expressing my love. No strings, no agendas. Just love.

Saturday 1st April

Mark 14:12-26

"Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." They were saddened and one by one they said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?" "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me."

The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man!"

There are many theories about what motivated Judas to do what he did. He may even have believed that Jesus was misguided and was trying to help him. It is interesting that the disciples didn't know who the betrayer was. Jesus had probably known for some time. Yet he didn't treat Judas any differently from anyone else. And each of the disciples questioned whether it might be himself.

Where might I betray Jesus? And how can I follow his example of loving those who do?

Monday 3rd April

Mark 14:27-42

"Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Jesus finds himself alone and grappling with the temptation to run away. This last test leads to his mind becoming resolutely committed to carrying out his Father's will for him. Sometimes we "know" there really is only one path we must pursue, although there may seem to be other possibilities. Unlike Jesus we are not alone - because He is with us.

*"Thy will, not mine be done" is such a hard thing to pray.
I can try praying it today.*

Tuesday 4th April

Mark 14:43-72

"But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again the High Priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am", said Jesus.

Bound, humiliated and falsely accused, Jesus seems in perfect control of himself and his responses. Compare Jesus' posture under hostile questioning with Peter's. Jesus is quietly certain of who he is, and he will not deny it.

When I feel under attack or threatened, what does it bring out in me? What did Jesus have that I need?

Wednesday 5th April

Mark 15:1-32

"Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. The crowd came and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead."

The Jewish leaders knew the sentence they wanted. They wanted an end to the threat from this Nazarene. Their problem was the Roman Governor - Pilate - who wasn't convinced that Jesus deserved a death sentence. Pilate hoped the old custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover would free Jesus.

It backfired on him, and he didn't have the courage of his convictions. Political convenience came before justice.

Where do I find the voice of the mob very compelling, convincing me to act against my better judgment? How can I stand against it?

Thursday 6th April

Mark 15: 33-47

"With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

See from his head, his hands,
his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small,
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my heart, my life, my all.

Friday 7th April
Mark 16

"When they looked up, they saw that the very large stone had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.

We see the Resurrection as a joyful event. For those who were there, the first reaction was fear and bewilderment. That's very human and understandable - this was totally without precedent. God is opening up a new chapter unlike anything that has gone before. Making the transition, and understanding this new reality, will take a bit of time.

Lord, you are always making things new, always leading us forward. Help us to follow without fear where you are leading us into a new thing.