

**Date:** 09 April 2023 **Service/s:** Across the diocese

**Title:** He is not here!

**Passage:** Matthew 28:1-10

**Aim:** 1. Apologetic - the resurrection really did take place  
2. Result - take hold of the news (explaining repentance); proclaim the news

**Outline:** Not made up  
No mistake  
No where else

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## INTRODUCTION

Easter – how one weekend changed the world forever!

So do you agree??

That would depend on whether or not Jesus of Nazareth actually rose from the dead, or whether we've been conned!

If Jesus is still dead – the world is unchanged

If Jesus is alive – everything has changed!

So here's where we are heading this morning – I want you to be sure that Jesus' death and resurrection is

**1. Not made up**

**2. No mistake**

3. (and that we have) **No where else to turn**

## 1. NOT MADE UP

now are we being **sane** and **sensible** in continuing to believe that Jesus died and rose again? - **claiming** it to be **true**; /// or are we having ourselves **on**?

The Bible itself says – look – if Jesus **didn't** rise from the dead – **Christians** are more to be **pitied** than any other **people**.

Because if Jesus **didn't** rise from the dead

- Our whole **understanding** of who Jesus **is**, comes under **question**...
- We've been completely **sucked** in to a **lie**
- We're **living** life based on nothing more than a **fairy tale**
- We have **no hope** for the present and **nothing** to look to in the **future**!

If Jesus **DIDN'T** rise from the dead – more **fool us!** //

Plenty of sceptics say that the Easter story is a **great** myth and Christians shouldn't **confuse** the issue by trying to **claim** that it actually happened! //

**every** culture has its **myths** – say the sceptics - which **drive** them and **empower** them - this is **our** myth!!  
////

whether or not it is **history** is **irrelevant!** – they say

But friends... if it is just **myth** to keep our **hopes up** – let's say in times such **COVID 19**, rising **interest rates**, souring **inflation**... increased **international tensions**...

...if it's just a **story** to keep our **hopes up**... then frankly – **I don't want to know about it**... it has all the impact of reading **Cinderella** to your **children**... a **fairly tale** with lovely **sentiments** but nothing which is going to sustain you for the rest of your **life!** //

So let me say as clearly as I can – that there are clear indications in **this** text from Matthew 28 - and from the other gospels that this is **not made up**...!

Why do I say that? – because it's **women** who are first reported to have seen an empty tomb and to hear from messengers who claim 'he is not here; he has risen'...

if you were making this **up** – there is no way in the **world** you would have as your key **witnesses** – first to the empty **tomb** and first to tell the **disciples** – **women!**

A woman's testimony was worth **nothing** in the **ancient world**... fortunately that's not the case now – but in the world of the **1<sup>st</sup> century**, a woman's evidence wasn't **admissable** in **court**... it was reckoned **unreliable**.

So – let's be **clear** - If you were making this **up**, **if you were fabricating a myth**, there is no way you'd have **women** first to see either the **tomb empty** // or **Jesus** himself

OK - but how do we know that the writers weren't so **clever** as to write the account in such a way that it has that ring of **reality** to it?

Tony Morphett - a writer of some episodes of Australian soaps etc - *I have written **fiction** and I have written **facts** - there is distinctly **different** style to both. **This** has the **distinctive** features of **fact**, not **fiction**.*

Charles **Colson** -said of **Watergate** - the whole success evolved around everyone involved in the process sticking to the same **story**. Well they **didn't**. Within **48 hours** everything fell **apart!** //

Charles **Colson** goes on to day - how do you expect **that twelve disciples** / - shattered because their leader had been **taken**; **broken men** - men who had locked themselves **away** because they thought they were going to be arrested and killed **next** - how do you expect that they **rallied** and became **strong men of leadership** and **vision** and put their **lives** on the **line** and **preached** and **wrote** and were **martyred** - all for the sake of a **myth**? How did **twelve** men maintain the **con-story** for so long - even to the point of **death**? //

Jesus' death and resurrection is **not made up**. //

I want you to be absolutely **certain** of that this Easter!

it **happened**. This account is **true**. He is **alive**. My salvation is not an **imaginary** salvation from an **imagined** problem - but a **real** rescue from an impossible **situation** I was in before God!

**Not made up** - that is the first take home point today - and the second is this:

the events of Easter were

2. **no mistake**.

the **crucifixion** of Jesus - sad and terrible as it was - was no strange **quirk** of **history** –

It isn't that God **slipped up** and things got out of **hand** and Jesus went to his **tragic** end and so God had to figure out what to do **next!** //

His death had been **planned** from the beginning of **time**.

as Jesus met with the disciples that first Easter day - he pointed out to them that everything that had happened leading up to the crucifixion had not only happened in accord with what **he** had told them while he was with them - it happened in accord with what the **OT** had recorded over a thousand **years!**

everything **had** to be fulfilled that the whole **OT** had been **pointing** to - that it was **necessary** that **the Messiah** should **suffer** and on the third **day / rise again**.

it was **always** going to be this way.

God had a **plan** to rescue **mankind** from **sin** and its consequent **death**.

God didn't want people to **die** because of their rebellion - *but rather that they **turn and live!***

and what he made **possible** in Christ's death was that the **penalty** for our **rebellion** be **paid** for - so that if we **turn** from **rebellion against** God to living **for** God // we will **live!**

it was the **only** way for God to put things right between us.

**Yes - all** that happened - happened in accord with the **prophecy** of the OT written **hundreds** of years before!  
- another reason for not believing for a **moment** that the whole thing is myth. It fits the **prophecy** in **greater detail** than most of us **realise**.

no **myth** - no **mistake** - and

(3) **No where else.**

what do I mean by that?

That we simply have **no where else to turn!**

If it was proved beyond **all** doubt tomorrow that Jesus stayed **dead...** then you have to know **there is no Christianity.**

No **hope** for the **future**

No **justice** in the **end**

No **answers** to life's **questions**

No promise of **peace**

No chance of **change**

No **strength** for **living.** ///

If Jesus **didn't** rise – **all** is **lost!**

**Everything** hangs on this! ////

There was a time in Jesus' ministry when the things he had been saying were just too **hard** for those listening and some who had been disciples, began to walk **away**

Jesus turned to the 12 who were **closest** – his **inner circle** – and said to them – *you don't want to leave too do you?*

And they said – *where **else** have we to go? – you **alone** have the words of **eternal life...***

There IS no where else to go... and I encourage you today be **confident** in Jesus' **resurrection...**

...and in these **very strange days** in which we **currently** live – draw **strength** and **comfort** from Jesus' **death and resurrection** by which you have been **forgiven** and have **eternal life...!**

I want to ask you today... if something threatened **your** life today... Would you be absolutely **clear** that you have **eternal life?**

**Because** Jesus died and rose again for you, you **SHOULD** be...!

Your sin is **paid for**, and Jesus has won **victory** over **death** – and opens the **gates** of **everlasting life** for **YOU!**  
///

So please be **clear** about Jesus' resurrection this Easter Day

This was

## 1. NOT MADE UP

**No other explanation is feasible**

## **2. NO MISTAKE**

the events of Easter – Jesus' death and resurrection were no **mistake** but **central** to God's plan to **rescue** us from the mess we were in due to our rebellion

## **3. NO WHERE ELSE**

No where **else** to turn – but in **Jesus** – we have **hope** and **life** and **peace** and **hope** and **joy... //**

**Happy Easter!**

**He is risen!!**