



Fit for purpose

Easter - A purposeful death

w/c 17 April 2022

"Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven" (NT Wright)

Read John 20:1-18

John focusses the relating of these events through the eyes of Mary Magdalene. Accounts in the other gospels make it clear that several other women were with her – for at least some of the time. What is certain though is that the first witnesses were all women. Why do think Jesus chose to appear first to those whose testimony would not be accepted as witnesses in a court of law? Why not one of the 11 remaining apostles?

I am always intrigued by the responses of the Greek philosophers to Paul's preaching in Athens (Acts 17:18), when he spoke of the good news about Jesus and the resurrection – *"He seems to be advocating foreign gods."* Did they think that Paul was touting Anastasis (Greek: ανάσταση – raising up, hence resurrection) as some female consort of the male Jesus? Overall, does this give us an insight into Paul's approach to sharing the gospel with non-Jews? He's not centring on the Hebrew scriptures or theology, but rather, I feel, basing his message on telling the story. How can we use story in sharing the gospel?

As we reach the end of this study series, take a few moments to reflect on what you learned of your Christian journey over its course. As well as being fit for purpose as individuals, there is a clear need to apply this to churches collectively. Our diocese is currently asking congregations to consider the question: *Church. What we are and what we could be...* This is based on the premise that:

"As Church we are called to be a Christian presence in both geographical communities and also to communities of interest such as schools and online groups

Christian calling is always practised within community, serving the world. God is everywhere and calls people to be everywhere, not just in the 'churchy' places and not just for individual satisfaction."

We are asked to further consider, *"What does our Christian presence look like now, and what might it look like in the future?"* How do you feel we can become a church of missionary disciples each active in that ministry to which they have been called and confident in doing so?

You can find further information on the diocesan website¹ and in particular in the discussion material².

Finally, reflecting on how well we match up to what God is expecting of us, I find my thoughts turning to the summary given by Micah (chapter 6 verse 8) - *"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

How far does this sum up a life that is 'fit for purpose' for us as individuals and a congregation?

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)

¹ <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/enabling-ministries>

² <https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/content/pages/documents/enabling-ministries-guide-for-exploration.pdf>