

Easter Eve 2025 (19th April)

Romans 6:3-11; Luke 24:1-12

A Reflection by Mark Willis, Lay Reader

We are at church to celebrate together the event that is at the very heart of our faith.

An empty tomb signifies the resurrection of Jesus and his victory over death.

An empty tomb validates what he and the Old Testament have said about himself - that he is the Son of a loving God who himself has paid the ultimate sacrifice in order to be reunited with us.

Whose death settles in full the punishment for all our sins, allowing our repentance to free us from sin's dark hold over our lives.

Whose grace welcomes believers into God's family to live an enlightened and eternal life.

Our knowledge and understanding of this forgiveness and grace is a cause for joy, but a heavy cost will yet need to be paid by his disciples who two thousand years ago were far from celebrating at this time.

They were in hiding in fear from the religious authorities, in shock from the brutal death inflicted upon Jesus, distraught at their abandonment of Jesus, and unable to comprehend the statements made several times by Jesus about the nature of his death and rising.

Not until later today on the road to Emmaus or later this week in a locked room will they receive understanding and peace from a risen Jesus.

Without them we wouldn't be here, because the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb were paid by the religious authorities to say that it was the disciples who took the body out of the tomb during the night and hid it.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, the eleven remaining disciples spread their knowledge and understanding throughout the ancient world, and all save one suffered unpleasant deaths when they refused to deny the deity and resurrection of Jesus.

Thanks to their perseverance we can celebrate the most important day in the lives of each one of us. We die to sin and rise with Jesus, stepping into the dawn of new life.

Alleluia Christ is risen. **'He is risen indeed. Alleluia'**.