



Easter Sunday Luke 24:1-12, 36-53: “Expect the unexpected?”

In our world today, you often learn to expect the unexpected.

III – For example, look at these amazing unexpected inventions:

- The butter stick
- The noodle cooler

Expect the unexpected!

But there is NOTHING more unexpected than what God did on this Sunday we call Easter Day.

The women go to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ dead crucified body with spices, and they find the stone of the tomb already rolled away. Unexpected.

They step inside and did not find Jesus’ body. Unexpected.

Two angels appear in front of them. Unexpected.

These angels tell them “He’s not here! He is risen.” Unexpected.

Then these angels say to them “Remember how he told you ‘the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ Then they remembered his words.”

So it was unexpected, but actually... it wasn’t. Remember how he told you?

And so these women go back and tell the disciples, but the disciples didn’t believe the words of the women. It was too “unexpected”.

So Peter got up and ran to the tomb and saw the empty tomb. Unexpected.

He went inside the tomb and saw the empty strips of linen. Unexpected.

And he went away wondering what had happened!

III – Hot cross buns

Let me tell you this – I **love** hot cross buns. I **can’t wait** until they come out in the shops. If they’re in the shops tomorrow for **next** Easter, I’ll be happy. But many years ago, something even better came out – something very unexpected – choc chip hot cross buns! Possibly the most exciting thing since the noodle cooler. Unexpected. But very welcome.

But there are also some sad developments – fruitless hot cross buns. I know some of you will not like me for saying this but... really? No fruit in a hot cross bun?!

Unexpected. And just plain ridiculous.

But I digress... now, imagine that I go to Baker's delight and ask for a Hot Cross bun. And they say: "Would you like a chocolate chip one?" And I reply "What are you talking about? There's no such thing! And they say: "Well, there is. We've had them for years. Here's one for you to see for yourself! Look! Here it is. Do you want it? And I turn around and I see the people behind me and I say to them: "They've got choc chip hot cross buns! And the people behind me look over the counter and see it and say: "No! It can't be true! There's no such thing! And all of us walk away, without the choc chip hot cross buns and we're wondering to ourselves: "What's going on? How can this be? How can hot cross buns have choc chips? It's impossible!" And we walk away empty handed and confused.

That's the reaction from Peter when he sees the empty tomb.

He's been **told** that Jesus has risen. He was **told** that it would happen by Jesus himself. Yet when it actually happens, and he goes to investigate, and sees the empty tomb, he goes away empty handed.

Peter saw him killed. But then there's an empty tomb. Angels. Strips of linen. Witnesses. Then Jesus appears himself in verse 36. And he speaks. LOOK at my hands and feet. Give me something to eat – see! I am alive. Physical body. REAL resurrection. And by the way – remember – I TOLD YOU that this was going to happen! And here I am. Flesh and bones. NOW will you believe?

He was dead.

But then... Sunday.

He was dead. Expected after a crucifixion. But then Sunday happened. Then the tomb was empty. Then the body was gone. And Jesus appeared.

It's one thing to EXPECT the unexpected. But it's another thing to ACCEPT the unexpected when it happens.

The disciples lived with Jesus for 3 years. They heard him say again and again that he was going to be handed over to be killed and then rise again from the dead. But when it happened, they didn't expect it. They didn't expect the body to be gone. They didn't expect him to turn up in the room during morning tea. They didn't expect to be able to see the nail marks in his hands and the hole in his side. They didn't expect to see him eat, to hear him speak, or to touch him and hold him. But then... Sunday.

It was completely unexpected. But then, finally, they accepted it.

Jump down to verse 51: ⁵¹*While he (Jesus) was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.* ⁵²***Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.***

This is true acceptance. They worshipped him. It was unexpected. But finally they accepted. And they worshipped him. That is what it means to accept Jesus. It means to worship him as King.

III –

If I went down to a café and they were giving away free coffee, it would be unexpected. Do you think I would accept that free coffee? I would! I **would** accept it! There are many things in this world that are unexpected. But that doesn't mean we just reject them. If something is unexpected, we still need to consider it and decide whether to accept it or not.

So what does it mean to **accept** the death **and resurrection** of Jesus? What does it mean to worship him in every day life?

III – Imagine this: serious situation – you're lying on your death bed, about to die any moment – who you would want to be there to hold your hand? I've been with many people close to death. And I can tell you this: it doesn't matter if they're young or old, male or female, even the biggest, toughest bloke wants a hand to hold. It's a comfort. So as **you** face death, whose hand would you like to hold?

Because I think a lot of people will go to the grave, spiritually speaking, holding their own hand. Trusting that they've lived a good enough life for God. Or trusting in the idea that perhaps one day everyone will end up in heaven anyway. That it doesn't matter who you follow or what you believe. It doesn't matter as long as you believe in **a** god. It doesn't matter whose spiritual hand you hold in death. Many people will face death holding their own hand with their fingers crossed. I think that is a frightening way to die. Let me tell you why:

PPT – From verse 46: ⁴⁶He (Jesus) told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷**and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**"

Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in **his** name.

Repentance. Forgiveness. In the name of ... Jesus. That's where we find forgiveness.

Only in the name of Jesus. Only from Jesus.

Accepting Jesus means accepting that we need to repent and be forgiven **by him**.

Death is like a child crossing a busy, busy road. They need a hand to hold. We need the hand of Jesus to be forgiven and find eternal life with him.

III – When my grandmother was dying from cancer, my oldest brother went to visit her and he had his 3 sons with him. And the kids waited outside.

While they were outside, they made daisy chains with the daisies they found outside. Nana said she would really love to see the kids. The kids came in and the youngest, who was 4 years old, was holding his daisy chain. Nana said "What have you got there?" He said "It's a daisy chain. Here – you can have it. You can wear it when you meet Jesus." And he gave it to her. And she died that afternoon.

That 4 year old knew exactly what dying meant. It means you're going to meet Jesus. Lord and King and Judge of all. We need to be prepared to meet Jesus. We will face **him**. We will answer **him**. And when we face hi, we want to be holding his hand – we want to be TRUSTING him.

It's one thing to **expect** the unexpected. Like a man rising from the dead. It's another thing to **accept** it. Because it doesn't just mean accepting that he rose. It means **accepting him** as Lord and King. **Accepting** he is the one with the power over sin and death and that he is the one we will answer to.

But maybe you've already turned to Jesus. Maybe you've already accepted him as Lord. Maybe you're sick of hearing Easter sermons about the same old things! Well, let me ask you a simple question – whose hand are you holding **today**? Right now? Who are you trusting? Who are you holding on to? Easter is a good day to ask yourself that question again – who am I holding on to? Who am I **really** trusting in?

Maybe you're juggling a lot of things. Family. Work. Marriage. School. Friends. Finances. Sometimes, unexpectedly, we lose our grip on Jesus' hand. Yet his is the hand we need to hold on to every day. Every moment. The hand of forgiveness. This Easter, how about grabbing hold of Jesus' hand again? And letting go of some of those things that have become more important to you than him?

Let's pray and do that now.