

WEEKLY SERMON

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The Spirit can move your immovable stones

A fun fact quiz for Easter. Try it for size!

How many Cadbury's Crème Eggs would you need to add up to the weight of the stone that was rolled in front of Jesus's tomb?

If you guessed anywhere in the region of 25,000-50,000 then you would have won a prize on Easter Sunday morning in my Easter morning quiz at St Michael's Kirkham.

It turns out that these tomb-sealing stones were a big deal. One to 2 tonnes in weight. They were a two-man job to roll down the downhill groove to seal them. Not so easy to push back uphill to open it again.

Early on the first Easter morning, the question that the women ask on the way to the tomb is a very practical one: "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb?"

This Easter, I found myself praying this for Lancashire.

I prayed for stones to be moved from tombs. I asked that this same 'incomparably great power ... which raised Jesus from the dead' (Ephesians 1.19-20) namely the Spirit of God himself, would do the same quiet Easter-morning miracle for those who find themselves trapped behind, underneath immovable 'stones' in our time.

Stones of dread of death, fear of the future, substance dependency, unforgiveness ...

So, it was wonderful to witness the aftermath of that same quiet miracle myself - on Easter morning.

I went to visit a friend from where we used to live.

A couple of months ago, I phoned her to find her brother was with her in her family bubble.

He said straight off: "Jill, I've just made an oath to Jesus: I am so impressed by what has happened to my sister that I have decided to join her church."

When I last met her brother three years ago he was in a very, very dark place. Crushed. Defeated.

So when I visited them on Easter morning, fresh from church, it was wonderful to witness the effects of this quiet miracle.

The darkness had lifted. He looked like a different man. Radiant. Unbound.

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He added: “And do you know what, Jill, the other day, I think I heard angels singing.”

I bet he did. They have a lot to celebrate when immovable stones like his are rolled away.

I wonder, what are your immovable stones today? Ask for God’s Spirit to move them.

His power is literally incomparable. And you get a bigger prize than many, many Crème eggs!

Bishop Jill Duff