

# WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



## Seeing Jesus *(John 20:1-18)*

It was in 1930 that the 23-year-old Alfred Wainwright first visited the Lake District from his home in Blackburn.

He got off the train at Windermere and climbed the path towards Orrest Head. Many years later, he wrote, '... quite suddenly we emerged from the trees and were on a bare headland, and as though a curtain had dramatically been torn aside, beheld a truly magnificent view.' Once he'd seen that view, life was never quite the same again.

This Sunday we mark an event that has been life-changing for millions of people over the last twenty centuries: the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The theme of seeing (and failing to see) is important to John's gospel. His account of the resurrection is given to us through the experiences of eye-witnesses.

So in verse 1, Mary arrived at the tomb of Jesus and 'saw that the stone had been removed' from the entrance.'

Assuming that the body has been taken, she runs to Peter and John. They are also eyewitnesses of the empty tomb. Significantly, when John saw, he 'believed' (v8).

Every time the word 'saw' is used in this chapter, it gets stronger and stronger.

Later in the day Mary herself encounters the risen Lord himself. She went to the Disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord' (v18)

On the same evening the disciples 'were overjoyed when they saw the Lord' (v20),

The one person who famously did not see the Lord on that day was Thomas, who initially refuses to believe unless he could see with his own eyes (v25).

His confession of Jesus as 'my Lord and my God' is arguably the climax of the whole gospel.

And Jesus' response to this confession is: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (v29)

We are in the category of 'those who have not seen'. None of us was there to see the empty tomb or the risen Lord Jesus. So how can we believe?

John the gospel writer tells us that his record of Jesus is sufficient evidence for us (who were not there on that first Easter Sunday) to be able to make the same confession as Thomas: 'My Lord and my God'. Once we make that confession, life is never quite the same again.

**Rev Canon Andrew Raynes, Vicar of Blackburn Christ Church**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES