

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Easter – God’s answer to disappointment

There can’t be anyone who goes through life without experiencing disappointment. Even the person who has enjoyed a successful career and retires with a comfortable pension and lives to see their grandchildren, and maybe even great-grandchildren, will have thoughts of regret as they look back. There will be many things that didn’t work out as hoped.

And when we look beyond our own lives and consider our world and our nation then the sense of disappointment intensifies. In 1945 the United Nations was founded with much optimism in the aftermath of the horrors of World War 2 and yet 80 years later there are still numerous conflicts raging around the globe. In the same hopeful post-War period, the Welfare State was established in Britain and yet here we are with constant reminders of poverty and deprivation in our modern society.

Disappointment seems to be inescapable. It certainly crushed the hearts of the disciples of Jesus following his crucifixion. In the ‘Road to Emmaus’ story towards the end of Luke’s Gospel the writer tells us of two disciples weighed down by unfulfilled dreams.

A stranger (known to the reader as Jesus himself) falls in with them as they trudge home from Jerusalem on the Sunday afternoon and asks what the problem is. And they tell him about the death of Jesus – ‘a prophet, powerful in word and deed’. (24:19) And then they add, ‘but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel’. (v21)

So not only are the two disciples experiencing devastating bereavement, they’re suffering overwhelming disappointment. Apparently, they had expected Jesus to re-enact the Exodus in some way. Just as Moses had overcome the cruel foreign oppressor in his day and freed Israel, so too the hope had been that Jesus would do something similar in his day.

But then the cruel foreign oppressor – the Romans – had somehow come out on top and managed to execute Jesus.

But the disciples needed to grasp a crucial truth about Jesus the Messiah – he didn’t come to save his people from their suffering, rather he came to save his people through his own suffering! (v26) So the disciples were focusing their hopes in the wrong place. Rather than yearn for something better in this world, they needed to grasp that the death and resurrection of Jesus gives the hope of glory with him in the world to come.

Where are your hopes? If they’re centred on this world then you’ll always be disappointed.

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