

## **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April**

### **'Peace in a time of tears.' John 20:10-20**

Share with each other your experience of 'tears' at this time, or if not tears, then anxiety, fear or depression.

In the events of Good Friday and Easter day, we often bypass 'holy Saturday' and don't fully engage with the experience of desolation and utter despair in our rush towards the joy of Easter day. Yet this 'in between' time is an important expression of our human experience. We all go through seasons of 'darkness' and intense sorrow and it is important that we acknowledge that and accept where we are at, if we find ourselves in that place today.

- How do you think the disciples spent the time between the crucifixion and the end of Easter day? How was their mental health at this time?

Notice how brutally honest the psalms are about those seasons of life. Often called Psalms of lament, read Psalm 42:3.

- Has there ever been a time in your life when your anguish of heart reflected this depth of sorrow?

Similarly Psalm 88 (particularly verse 18) has nothing which could be called positive about it. It is an expression of total despair: 'The darkness is my closest friend'. Yet it is in the dark experiences of life where God meets us (Psalm 23 :4) and where treasure is to be found (Isaiah 45:3).

- When did Jesus experience these depths of despair and desolation?

Yet Psalm 139:12 re-assures us that nothing can separate us from God's light (or love: Romans 8:38).

- Why does Mary at first fail to recognise Jesus?

CS Lewis; 'You can't see anything properly whilst your eyes are blurred with tears'.

- Have there been occasions when your vision of Jesus has been blurred by other things?
- Why does Jesus tell Mary not to hold onto him?

*'Tragically, over the centuries the Christian community has shown a far greater interest in sitting at Jesus' feet, holding onto him amid the comfort of his presence, than in going out into the world to share the good news of the risen Lord with broken, needy hearts who have as valid a claim to know him as we'* Bruce Milne

Three times in this chapter Jesus says the words, 'Peace be with you'.

- How can we know Jesus's peace in our time of tears?

Pray for one another.