



## Pastor's Page

*"Tales of the unexpected"*



Last week I received a text message from my sister informing me that the brother of a very good friend of ours had been found dead at his home. The text stopped me in my tracks and instantly put things into perspective. Whatever I was currently worrying about (can't remember now what was troubling me!) suddenly seemed unimportant as this sad news dominated my thoughts.

Death always comes as a shock especially when it's unexpected. However, the death of Jesus was not only a shock it was a scandal. He was executed for a crime he never committed, an innocent man dying at the hands of guilty men. Friday was the darkest day in Palestinian history, as from 12.00 noon until 3.00pm the sun refused to shine whilst Jesus' life ebbed away. Yet during his torture he cried out "Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing". No-one had expected that! And then when death neared, Jesus said "It is finished" and with that, he "gave up his spirit". The women followers, weary from weeping, watched as two secret disciples were given permission to take Jesus' body down from the cross, wrap it in a clean cloth and lay it in an unused tomb belonging to one of them. The women followed the men to the tomb with the intention of returning as soon as the Sabbath was over to anoint his body with spices and perfumes. This would be the last loving act that they could do for him. Their Sabbath conversation was dominated by talk of the huge stone placed at the entrance of the tomb.

When the long night was nearly over, rising before dawn, the same women set out for the garden tomb. In the early morning light they were shocked by the sight that greeted them - the stone that had sealed the entrance to the tomb had now been removed. They hadn't expected that! Curious and confused they hesitantly entered the tomb expecting to find the body of Jesus. Suddenly they gasped in horror - the body was gone! In their heightened state of shock some of the women ran out of the tomb (and kept running) whilst others remained, transfixed to the spot as if paralysed by fear! It was at this moment that two men appeared from nowhere and nearly scared the living daylights out of them. They had a message from God, but before they could deliver it they had to calm the women down. They began "don't be alarmed" (one can imagine the women thinking "now they tell us!!) and continued by pronouncing "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified...He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter". And they did so out of obedience and also because 'wild horses' wouldn't have been able to stop them telling others! And so the greatest news of all time was told for the first time to trembling but trustworthy women. They came and saw and went and told. Isn't it typical of God to arrange for the first witnesses to the resurrection to be those who were undervalued and often exploited in their day? No-one expected that!

And so this earth-shattering event, unexpected by most, witnessed by a few, has changed the lives of millions down the centuries. It proves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and has won the victory over sin and death. He is our great hope for today, tomorrow and all eternity. **Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Amen**