

Easter Morning

Matthew 28:1-11

So here's three Easter moments to concentrate on this morning.

Four moments in Matthew's story that deserve some attention.

The first is the women....

The Sabbath is over, the week is over, just over
That's highly symbolic,
The week is over, the week of creation is just over.

And the first day of the week is just dawning,
And I expect to read the the first thing, is the second thing that is going to happen.

The first thing to happen is the women,
The first thing to happen is the love
The first thing to happen is that the women attend

Women see the thing happening before it happens
They have to hold it, before it sees the light of day.

There is something very tender to me
That it is love that ushers in the first day
Expectant love that does not know what to hope for, but love goes
Love shows up,
Love goes into the darkness
Love goes and it does not know what will happen

And women do love like that
Women do
That is the first thing you have to know about Easter
The first thing about the dawning of a new week
Is that women love.
Women get up and they love.

That is the First Moment, The Women Go

The Second Moment is the earthquake

The whole earth has to be shaken
The whole earth
This is not just a tomb
This is not just a body
The whole earth has to be shaken

Because on this earth, what has happened is that things die
And then they return to the earth
This is a rhythm which holds us in - the circle of life, the things are born and the things die and they return to this earth.

And we all live in that kind of world
The world that you can see
The world of a kind of natural order
A world of strict mechanics - there is no grace - you reap what you sow
There is a frightening nature to this world - you are alone
This world gets shaken

This is the world that you can understand
This is the world that you can get good at

And this whole world is to be shaken.
Post-Easter world is a shaken world

The implication is that the earthquake has been caused by the angel
He can shake the earth
And then he rolls a stone
It is great strength and great precision on this angel
He is shaking the whole earth

Now what is happening inside, God is at work inside - we know it is the power of God inside
But has asked the angel to take care of some of the work outside
The earth shattering, the stone rolling.

This is a shaken world of great power at work
Do we trust the great powers to be at work in this world
Do we trust them

God within and the angels.

How do you think the angel was chosen - how was he chosen, what a job he got
To shake the earth and then move the stone
I love this angel

We move stones to make walls
We move stones to build houses
He moves stones to shake this earth into a place where dead people live.

And Then He Sits On It

I love this moment

I don't know but do you ever get the thing where you sit down, after you do a job

It could be that the reason he is doing this is to frighten the soldiers
But it seems a strange thing to do
There is almost an enjoyment of this
A taking in of the view
I am just going to sit on the stone.

All the other things are necessary - this doesn't seem necessary, it's just something that he can do

It's a kind of triumph over death thing

It reflects the thing that he scares the guards who belong to the most powerful empire the world has ever known, and they are running away, because no one can compete with an earth quake stone rolling angel

He knows he's scaring them

He knows his appearance is like lightning

He knows his clothes are like snow

And he just sits there,

Liking it,

Not stopping to help the guards

That's him there

On the stone.

There's an easy enjoyment.

And the final thing I want to think about is the moment that the angel says to the women

Go to Galilee

Go back home, go back to where all of this started
Go back to the outsides, the strange forgotten north
Go there, that's where you are going to hear the next thing
The thing that is about you getting work to do.

Go there

Go there

Galilee is the place where they are going to be given the instructions to share the gospel with the whole world

You see the thing about Easter is that it is work

Everything doesn't arrived gift wrapped on Easter Day, the great "Happy ever after" to the story,
The story has an instruction to it, has a future, you have to now go and work out the story.

Easter is not a one-day wonder of wish fulfilment

You are sent out to do the work

Sam Wells has written that the 50 days of Easter is more challenging than the 40 days of Lent, because resurrection has given us freedom from sin and death and committed us to the hard work of life in Church and Kingdom based on the new possibilities now open to us. God doesn't hand us those possibilities fully formed, that wouldn't be glorious abundant life, that would be infantilisation.

So where are you called to go and work out the Easter life

How does your world look different because the work of love ushers in Easter Day

How does you world look different because there are angels who can shake the earth and move stones

How does your world look because of the joyous accepting work of resurrection.

I think that's the challenge - how does this look now.

There is a remarkable moment that happened in South Africa in February 1990

After years of campaigns, and protests, Nelson Mandela is to be released from prison

He has been kept in a lower security prison, and in a house, which is a mile from the prison gate

Everyone expects him to take the car,

But when the door opens of the prison

When they say to him - you are free to go,
What does he do
He walks
The free man walks
He walks to the gates
He walks through the crowds

Freedom means that he doesn't sit back now
Freedom means that he walks
He walks into the difficulty of the negotiations
The difficulty of the elections where it felt at one point that the whole world was going to explode
The challenge of the presidency
The challenge of bringing about the Truth and Reconciliation commission
And also the challenge of bringing peace, healing
A break to the cycle of violence

All that happens after the moment of release,
And he symbolises that because he walks.

And today I want to ask you
How are you going to walk differently
Because the tomb is empty

And that is the fifth moment
You might think that is enough
The moment of getting up
The moment where the angels take over for a while
The moment where you go to Galilee

You might think that is over
But you get to Galilee
And the instruction now is
Go to all the nations and make disciples
Go
You keep walking

Keep walking into a world that is different
Because women showed up
Because an angel shook the earth
Then sat on a stone

The told us to Go to Galilee
And in Galilee we were told to keep walking

There's a guy
He got raised
He is risen
He is risen indeed

AMEN