

Sunday 4 April 2021

Rev. Jim Cowan

A family was driving in their car on a beautiful sunny day. Dad had his window open, and a bee flew into the car. His daughter in the back started to scream because she was allergic to bee stings and was afraid it would sting her.

The dad stopped the car and reached out and caught the bee in his hand.

He held it and waited for the inevitable sting, then, in pain, he let it go. When the bee was flying around the car again the wee girl started to scream again. "Oh dad it's going to sting me!"

But the father said gently: "No darling it won't sting you now, look at my hand."
In his hand was the bee's sting.

The dad took the pain of the sting to save his daughter from having to be afraid of it. That's what Jesus did on the cross - he took the pain of death and sin so that we would not have to fear it. By his death he took away the sting of death. That's why we celebrate Easter - because Jesus died and was raised to life, so now although we die, we know that it is not the end and through Jesus' sacrifice we can share his life after death in heaven.

The Bible says "Death where is your sting now?" Jesus shows us his hands. They don't have a bee sting, but they have the marks of the nails from the cross. He has the sting of death and sin in his hands and we don't need to be afraid.

Reading: 1 Peter 2:22-25

He committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but placed his hopes in God, the righteous Judge. Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed. You were like sheep that had lost their way, but now you have been brought back to follow the Shepherd and Keeper of your souls.

I love the **hymn**:

***See, what a morning,** gloriously bright,
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;
Folded, the grave-clothes,
Tomb filled with light,
As the angels announce Christ is risen!
See God's salvation plan,
Wrought in love, borne in pain,
Paid in sacrifice,
Fulfilled in Christ the Man,
For he lives, Christ is risen from the dead!*

Sunday 4 April 2021 (continued)

*See Mary weeping, 'Where is he laid?'
As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb;
Hears a voice speaking,
Calling her name;
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!
The voice that spans the years,
Speaking life, stirring hope,
Bringing peace to us,
Will sound till he appears,
For he lives, Christ is risen from the dead!*

*One with the Father, Ancient of Days,
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty;
Honour and blessing,
Glory and praise
To the King crowned with power and authority!
And we are raised with him,
Death is dead, love has won,
Christ has conquered;
And we shall reign with him,
For he lives, Christ is risen from the dead!*

Prayer

Living God, on this day of resurrection, we have come to celebrate the strength of your love— a love that triumphs even over death. As we exult in the miracle of your incarnate love, we thank you for the opportunity to encounter the Risen Christ here in our midst. Merciful God, we don't always recognize Christ, even when we are looking directly at your Incarnate Love. We cling to our assumptions about how life on earth should unfold, forgetting that life in your kingdom shatters those expectations. Forgive us when we go through our daily routine, forgetting to look for the Risen One. Forgive us when our desire to get back to worship is more about seeing our friends than it is about encountering you and our Resurrected Lord. Open our eyes and our hearts, O God, to the full awareness of your presence with us, in each and every moment of our lives. We pray in the name of the Christ who is alive today and forever! Amen.

Blessing

This is a day of new beginnings! This is the day of brightness and hope! For God has done wondrous things for us! Go in joyful peace and know that God's peace and love go with you always