

Easter 3A Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

It is getting dark as he eases the motorbike up the path to the front of the flat. As usual he is first home. His girlfriend works in town and buses. He stops the bike, turns off the key and makes sure the foot peg is on the stable concrete path. Its heavy if it goes over.

He takes off his gear and heads towards the sliding door which is the most convenient way inside. The flat smells lived in; cooking oil, cleaning products and cat. He shuts the door, it's getting cold.

He pauses in the lounge for a minute, the day's events a heavy weight upon his back. He heads for the bedroom and falls to his knees. The tears come and they flow and flow, he is raked with sobs.

He doesn't know what's happening. His mind is in turmoil, everything is wrong. He prays and prays and prays for Jesus to show him the right thing to do.

He hasn't had much to do with Jesus, he never thought much Jesus until he got this new job. His boss was a Christian. After that, it seemed Jesus was all he ever thought about.

His life is a shambles. He is on the weed most of the time, scratching around looking for roaches to smoke or driving all over the countryside looking for a deal, or selling so he had his own supply.

His relationship with his girlfriend was crap. Work was boring and going nowhere. It was all heavy duty nowhere when he looked at it like this.

The trouble was, this Jesus business didn't seem to make much sense either. It seemed to promise a lot but deliver little. So tonight, he was on his knees and the tears were flowing.

He didn't know how long he had been there, but he heard the door open. His girlfriend was home. He came in to the lounge, gave her a hug and felt a little better. He stood in the middle of the lounge room floor, looked up towards the ceiling and said, "Jesus, I give up smoking!"

He didn't know what to expect, if anything, but he certainly didn't expect to be rocked to the core of his being by a physical power that straightened him up and then nearly knocked him over.

He felt as if a huge hand had reached out and grabbed a large knot above his head and just yanked, and yanked hard! The cloak that was torn off him weighed 10 tonnes and was gone in the snap of a finger.

He knew straight away that he was free. Free of the weed. Free of the worries about he and his girlfriend. Free of the boredom of work. Free of nowhere. But he also knew he was free deeper down. Free of his fears for himself, the future, and the weight of life that he carried; his parents' divorce, his sadness, loneliness, and anger. Free of the guilt and worry about things he had done.

The heavy stuff had been ripped away and the light stuff bubbled up underneath. He knew it was Jesus, knew it without a moment's hesitation or doubt. He knew it was the Jesus who had promised much, and now, had delivered more. Jesus had done this. Raised him up and set him free.

I was 20 when I became a Christian and it changed my life. It is still the single best decision I have ever made.

Three months later Janet and I were married and then two weeks later, baptized together. It was 1980!

Peter said to them, "Repent, be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven: and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, and for your children, and for all who are far away...

You have been born anew, not of perishable but imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God...

But they urged him strongly saying "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and day is nearly over." So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were open and they recognized him...

This Jesus who promises much and delivers more...

Is the same Jesus we all meet in our baptism.

Is the same Jesus we all meet as word of God.

Is the same Jesus we all meet at this table every Sunday.

Is the same Jesus we all meet when we proclaim, "he is risen, he is risen indeed!" In the great 50 days of Easter.

This is the resurrection Jesus, that we proclaim to the world.

Alleluia!

