

## Care to Celebrate

We are about to celebrate the biggest Christian festival of the year. This is the festival that celebrates Jesus, celebrates all that He lived for as He plodded into Jerusalem on a donkey, celebrates His great love displayed for all to see as He gave His life on the cross and celebrates the awesome power of God seen through His resurrection. Now there's a reason to go to town with the festivities!

And I hope we will - and not just by eating too much Fair Trade chocolate. My question, though, is that if this is more than just a reason for a good party, what kind of appropriate response can we make in the face of such an immense set of events? How can we live lives of resurrection?

In the Gospel of John, after the resurrection, Jesus' first acts give us a fair clue as to the kind of response Jesus hoped for.

His first response is one of **care**. He meets Mary, someone suffering immeasurably under the weight of grief and the unimaginable experience of staying with Jesus through His death. Jesus' care is unending; in fact, if you scroll back in the story, you'll see that Jesus even makes sure that a new family emerges to care for each other (John 19.25-27). Quite incredible.

To all whom He meets, Jesus continues to bring **peace**. Ever since he was a baby, people have been told not to be afraid and now as He appears to His closest friends, Jesus' first words are 'Peace be with you'. I would think resurrection is a pretty strange experience for everybody!

Then we get to the core - the **sending**. This is just the start. " 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that He breathed on them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' "

"As the Father sent me, I am sending you." Our studies in John over the last three months have focussed on the signs - the things Jesus did that revealed God. So I believe that we shouldn't conclude anything less than that we are being sent to be signs. Signs that point to God, through care, through peace, through resurrection - the dramatic change from death to life, darkness to light, apathy to engagement, hate to love.

May God's Glory be seen this Easter!

**Andy Hall**