

# Guided by a cloud 54 (Exodus 13:21-22)

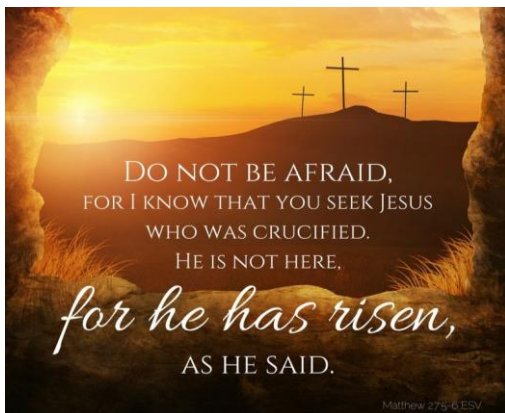
Good Friday, a view from the cross, adapted from a story by Bob Hartman.

Jesus looks right. There's a thief hanging on the cross next to him who says, "You saved other people, the blind, the sick, and the lame. So why can't you save yourself and me with you?" Jesus looks left to another thief whose words are very different, "Leave him alone, we're here because we deserve it, but this man has done nothing wrong." He looks Jesus in the eye, "Take me with you when I die." Jesus looks back and nods, "Today you will be with me in Paradise."

Jesus looks down, his mum is standing there. His mum who talked to an angel, had a baby in a stable and watched that baby grow into a man. She saw him turn water into wine, talk to thousands at a time and now watches him die. There are tears in her eyes so Jesus calls to his friend, "John take care of my mum for me please, as if she was your own."

Finally Jesus looks up. The sky is dark, the rain is falling as if there are tears in his Father's eyes too. "I've done what you ask me, I've told them about you and showed them how to live. Now with my death I'm taking away all the bad things anyone will ever do. It's finished. It's over. It's done." Then Jesus closes his eyes and dies for each one of us.

We know that Good Friday wasn't the end and Easter Sunday brings the joy of the risen Christ.



## Worship time

[See what a morning](#)

[He has risen](#)

[The greatest day in history](#)

In our society, we often confuse pleasure and joy. The key difference is that joy arises within you whereas pleasure is derived from something outside. Joy is something deeper, something worth striving for.

In the Resurrection and the apostles' mission afterwards, we see a deep joy. On Easter morning Mary Magdalene is seeking Jesus at the tomb. When he appears she is overwhelmed with joy. Her joy at the Resurrection not only satisfies her, it drives her to run back on uneven roads to tell the others. Her joy is such that it motivates Peter and John to run back. John realizes Jesus has risen and is filled with joy as well.

It takes Peter a little longer, but he too is filled with joy. In fact, his joy is so overwhelming that, despite being a shy, salty fisherman, he forgets his fear of public speaking and has to share this joy. In Acts we see him getting up before the crowd and telling them how much joy Jesus gave him. Later in the passage, we see 5,000 added to the numbers of the disciples. It is a joy that transforms not only him, but the crowd.

Joy at the risen Lord is an essential part of Christianity. Our relationship with Jesus should bring us that joy. However, it isn't automatic that because we are Christians we experience such joy. We need to respond to God's grace through faith.

In our lives, we have pleasure and we have joy. We might initially confuse them. However, when we reflect, we realise joy — not pleasure — is what matters. The Resurrection brings a deeper joy than we can experience in our day-to-day life. As we get closer to the risen Lord, we experience more of the deepest joy.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you" 1Peter 5:7