

Thought for the Day

Thought for the day is based on one of the day's lectionary readings.

For the Bible online, go to: <http://bible.oremus.org/>

Choose your version (we use NRSV in church)

Copy and paste the reference into the search box and the passage will be displayed.

Thought for the day

Saturday 28th March

John 11.17-27

'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

These words are familiar to us as part of the Funeral service when they are proclaimed in the opening 'sentences'. I always use this sentence first, so that these are the very first words of the service which the congregation hear. It feels like a triumphant declaration of faith to say this standing beside the coffin. Is it a denial of reality, a refusal to accept the fact of death? No, because we are asserting not only our faith in the resurrection of Christ, but our understanding of ourselves as spiritual beings, not just physical ones. The life within us is more than physical life.

Today's passage puts these words into their context, at the grave of Lazarus, the Lord's friend for whom he wept. They were spoken originally in the context of tragic death and personal grief. 'See how he loved him', remarked the onlookers as Jesus stood at the tomb and wept.

Martha already believed in the resurrection on the last day. But Jesus was leading her into a new understanding. It was about the present moment, and it was founded in himself. I am...the resurrection. The present tense echoes the sacred name of God, and it asserts a present reality or experience of risen life, not just something in the distant future and another existence. Life in the presence of God is open to us here and now.

When Lazarus walked out of his tomb it was to show us this truth, to illustrate in the most powerful way imaginable, that eternal life begins now. He discovered that in the midst of death. How can we walk in the light of Christ's risen life here and now in the midst of our corona crisis?

*Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort,
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*