

## The Easter Story - 'Many people met Jesus alive again'

It had been a very confusing few days for me. My friends and I have been following our friend Jesus for the past 3 years. We have followed him all over the country and we have watched him do amazing things. I have seen blind people stumbling around, tripping over stones and bumping into trees then suddenly Jesus has made them better and they can see and walk and jump without any problem. I have heard brilliant stories about people building houses. In one story Jesus told us about a person who worked very hard to build a house. He sawed up pieces of wood, he nailed them in place, he painted the house and even planted a garden full of trees and flowers but he built it on the sand and of course the whole thing collapsed because it did not have a good foundation. I have seen people whose lives were not very good and who did lots of wicked things like telling lies and stealing other people's belongings being told by Jesus that he forgave them for the wrong things they had done I thought it was only God who could forgive sins.

And now this week Jesus has been arrested by the vicious Roman soldiers who have punched him in the stomach and jabbed their spears into his back and kicked his legs. Please God, help people who are sad. Please God, help people to believe that Jesus came back to life again. Please God, help us to share good things with other people. Sorry God, that sometimes we do unkind things to other people. Sorry God, that sometimes we tell lies. Sorry God, that we ignore you sometimes. I wonder God, if this story is true. I wonder God, if Jesus is still alive. They have taken him to stand in front of King Herod who laughed at him and made fun of him because Jesus said that he was a King. Then the soldiers made fun of Jesus even more and pretended to treat him like a king by mocking him and putting a horrible crown made of sharp thorns that stuck into his head.

I watched as the soldiers made Jesus carry a huge piece of wood on his back which was very heavy. He could hardly walk and he stumbled up the hill to the place where they crucified him. Jesus was hanging on an enormous cross with his arms stretched out wide. The sun was beating down on him and he was so thirsty but he hung there with his head down. On each side of Jesus there were two other crosses and two other people hanging on them. Both these men had been found guilty of killing other people but Jesus had done nothing wrong at all. One of the murderers started saying horrid things about Jesus and Jesus just listened. I couldn't believe what happened next. The other murderer shouted out that Jesus had done nothing wrong and then he turned his head to Jesus as he asked Jesus to forgive him. The sun was beating down on him and he was so thirsty but he hung there with his head down. I thought it was only God who could forgive sins.

I was sitting at a distance with tears running down my face watching all this take place and then I looked up into Jesus' face and I could tell that he was in great pain but he was looking down at his mother nearby and he had tears in his eyes. He spoke to his friend John but slowly because he was in so much pain and he asked John to take care of his mother Mary and to look after her. I will never forget what happened next because the sky went very black and I could hardly see my hand in front of my face. Nobody knew what was happening because it was like the middle of the night in the middle of the day and people were trying to feel their way around with their hands stretched out in front of them.

The sky began to brighten again but when I looked up at Jesus still there on the cross I saw that he had died. My friends and I asked the soldiers on guard if we could take Jesus body and bury it according to our customs. We very gently lifted Jesus body down and we carried the heavy weight to a special tomb. We took long pieces of cloth and wrapped them around his body. We were all crying so much that it was quite hard to see what we were doing. When we had finished we went outside and with the help of the others I pushed and heaved and rolled the enormous stone over the entrance of the tomb. Then the Roman guards shoved us out of the way as they had been told to stand guard beside the tomb in case anyone tried to steal Jesus' body.

My friends and I all walked away very sadly and went home to bed because we were exhausted by what had happened. The next day was our special day of rest and nobody did any work so we sat in our houses too frightened to go anywhere or do anything. But on the following day there was a loud banging on my door and in burst Mary one of Jesus' other friends. Mary was puffing and panting and she could hardly speak. Eventually she explained that she had walked sadly to the tomb to take spices to put on the dead body but when she got there the stone had been moved and the tomb was empty. She bent down to go inside and saw all the special cloths lying neatly folded. Mary was laughing and crying and jumping up and down with excitement all at the same time. She told me that she had then run out into the garden where she had met Jesus and talked with him and that he was alive and well and he had told her to go and tell everyone.

Over the next few days' lots of our friends met Jesus. One day 2 of the disciples were walking along a road and a man they did not recognise joined them and as he walked with them and talked with them and ate food with them they realised that it was Jesus. Another day some of Jesus' disciples were sitting together in a house and suddenly they saw Jesus there with them. They jumped up in amazement because they thought he was a ghost. But then he told them all to sit down again and he talked with them and he ate with them and ghosts don't do that. And then there was the time when Thomas met Jesus. Thomas stamped his foot and said that he refused to believe the others when they told him that Jesus was alive. Stamping his foot again he said that he would never believe unless he could see and touch the marks of the nails in Jesus' hands. A short while later when Jesus appeared again he invited Thomas to look at the nail marks and to touch his hands but all that Thomas could do was to kneel down in front of Jesus.

Day after day for 40 days after he had died and then come back to life again Jesus spoke to lots and lots of people. He shared meals with them and he helped them and encouraged them and at the end of that time he went back to heaven where he had come from.