

Remade, Reformed and Renewed. Michael Palmer. Easter Sunday. 2020
 Have you ever put something on a stove and forgotten about it?

You know - set the sauce pan in the flame and ducked out to check the post got distracted by a passing neighbour, smelt the flowers, noticed a few weeds, knelt down for a little weeding, and an hour later walked back into the kitchen for a cup of tea only to find the saucepan - glowing and blackened!

In a flurry the stove turned off, the pan under the tap and you contemplate the next step

A quick easy step - open the bin and shaft the pan..... or
 A long process of cleaning fluid, a scourer and lots of elbow grease!

Well - no theoretical example - (*Michael has a pan to show which he recently re-turned to its former shinny glory*) - trust me - this was that ruined sauce pan! Now returned to its previous condition! To borrow a trump platitude - Its really Beautiful!

[Its quite a satisfying thing to return something to its glory. If you have every returned something to its original condition you might like to pause for a moment and reflect on an occasion when you have felt that joy. Or, perhaps you have something like a sauce pan waiting for you to return it to its original sparkle! What might that be? When will you start the restoration?]

THAT DAY

Our reading today begins with the dawning of a new day. No doubt the women in the story, the two Marys, assumed it was just a repetition of the day before. The prefix 're' can have that meaning - to repeat an action - re-wind, re-tell, re-count. I am sure that when these women went to the tomb on that first Easter Morning they were seeing the sun rise again - not as a spectacular new day but as a day dawning just like the days before had dawned. They countenanced no change. It was only the sun - to bring light - to enable them to see afresh the hopelessness of their situation

They knew what they would like to do, to pay respect to their dead friend, Jesus, by anointing his body with oils as fit for an honoured burial. But even that was unlikely for a heavy stone sealed the tomb and guards kept watch to keep the living from the dead. So Matthew tells us the women simply came to 'see the tomb'. They expected nothing!

That dawn seemed unto them as just a repetition of the dawn before.....

We know this sort of dawn. Sure each day has its new things - we have hopes and dreams - things we will put behind us and things we will achieve, but there remain immovable obstacles -

Powers beyond our control that seems to make all our choices as nothing - the rise and fall of markets, a raging fire, a virulent virus we know what it is to go and 'see' - knowing that we are unlikely to effect any real change!

Sure each day has its new things - we have hopes and dreams - things we will put behind us and things we will achieve, but there remain immovable obstacles -

There are the things which weigh us down. Grievs done to us. Grievs done by us. Things which we have put behind us yesterday only to see them re-surfacing tomorrow. Things which rob us of Peace in our hearts, rob us of peace in our friendships, things that rob us of peace when we consider the future.

So the women came to 'see', with the expectation that they would see that a day just like yesterday had dawned

A day when powers beyond our control might sweep us away
whether empires, institutions or viruses or death

A day when weights fix themselves to us - to pull us under -
 griefs and doubts and regrets!

But suddenly that day **SPARKLES** - Quickly their expectations are swallowed in the appreciation that 'that day' was no repetition of their yesterday. 'That' first day of the weekwas a remaking, a reforming - a renewing - of the day - A new first day, a new first week, a new beginning. A return to the sparkling - My sparkling sauce pan only a dull likeness.

Quickly the text removes the 'immovable obstacles' - the powers and our fears.....Matthew 28:2 The powers are humiliated (the guards shook and become like dead men). The humble are lifted up - the 'caring seeing' women are swept to the centre of importance - to 'caring, seeing and **doing**' - they carry the witness of the risen Jesus to the other disciples.

The power of Death was a power to 'swallow Jesus' but death's victory was fleeting - Jesus is alive - The reset button has been pushed Death is turned back - The angels declare - Do not be afraid. Jesus himself says - "Greetings" & "They will see me". That day sparkles with possibility. One man dead is now alive. The son of God again walks in the coolness of the day with humankind as friend. Easter day sparkles with the possibility of life abundant.

But perhaps you think that day sparkles slowly

True we still live with sadness and death. We still live with pain & contradictions, whether in legal decisions or environmental management, BUT the renewal has begun where it most matters - it has begun with God. Not that God needed renewal but our renewal, the 'day's' renewal - could not be effected by us - only God could do it!

God came among us to show us the life worth living. God came to gift us peace as Jesus freely laid down his life for us. God offers us life in a day that sparkles when Jesus rose from death and filled us with hope with the words - Do not be afraid!

God has set the reset button and made all things new
Let me leave you with three things of the new day.

Surprise - Its fulness is located away from Jerusalem - In Galilee they will see me. The promises of God which seemed to be Israel and temple focused now find their fulfilment in Jesus. The promises which were Jerusalem focused now find their fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem Surprise - Its a new day!

(See Galatians 3:15-16, John 2:21-22, Hebrews 12:22-24)

Peace - Peter argues that central to the reset is the exaltation of Jesus to be the judge of all human action. This is grounds for Hope not just in this life but for life eternal. In this life - it means that judgement is not ours to pronounce. Be at peace ours is not to condemn.

It is grounds for Hope larger than our lives - for if Jesus, lord of life, is the judge of the living and the dead - then wrongs will be righted! Of course, where we have responsibility in our lifetimes then let us struggle for wrongs to be righted but when we are exhausted and 'evil self-serving' powers seem victorious, then please know that there is a good and righteous judge who will ultimately right the wrongs!

The powers shook and became as dead men on that first Easter day and that stands as a promise for the fulness of the sparkling day! The powers of greed and pride and self and lies - and death**will not endure.**

Imitate - The Clarity of the day is seen in the life of Jesus. He is the judge, yes as the one who will right the wrongs, but he is also the judge as 'mitre rule'. If we would want to know the measure of a life, to see among us, that day which sparkles, then look to and imitate the life of Jesus - See how Jesus lived without favouritism

See how Jesus fed the hungry

See how Jesus stood with the lowly

See how Jesus shared the riches of his grace with us the poor in spirit.

In the light of Jesus and in the living of that light is where, for all to see, THAT DAY EVER FRESHLY SPARKLES.

[In truth 'that day ever freshly sparkles' but how do, or how might, we see it dawn afresh in our attitudes to self and our Community?]