

OT: Isaiah 26.1-9, 19

NT: Luke 24.1-12

Occasionally, I'm driving in the car with the radio on when someone wins one of those raffle type competitions. The broadcaster rings and tells them they have just won £100k or whatever the prize is. No-one ever initially just says 'Thank you' or 'That's great.' More often their first words are along the lines of 'You're kidding' or 'Is this a wind up?' Such good news is not always automatically believable.

This morning we had the traditional gospel for Easter two, the story of doubting Thomas and his refusal to believe the other apostles and his demand for hard evidence to prove the resurrection of Jesus. In Luke's gospel reading this evening, we see the apostles dismissing the good news brought by the women.

Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

Peter had to go and see for himself. Annoying but understandable. If people can't instantly believe that they have won a large amount of money, how can anyone be expected to readily accept that someone has risen from the dead; especially when you witnessed first hand how that person was brutally tortured and suffered the most agonising of deaths on a cross.

The tax-free gift of eternal life is the ultimate jackpot. That is what each one of us won through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and we didn't even have to enter any competition. Our ticket in the draw was the love of God for all his creation, his desire that no-one should lose or be lost.

When people are asked how they will spend the money they have just won, invariably these days, they say it means they can pay off bills, have a bit of a cushion in their lives to relieve money worries. So too for us, our debts are cleared and we are now free to live a life without worry. As Isaiah says:

*Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—
in peace because they trust in you.
Trust in the Lord for ever,
for in the Lord God
you have an everlasting rock.*

If we believe, if we accept this overwhelmingly generous gift, we can live our lives in peace and trust in the goodness of God. If we listen to him and are true to his will, we can enjoy a life of happiness and freedom. This does not mean self-indulgence but being open to the needs of others, of being willing to serve, of looking for a true contentment beyond the power of material goods. We can live lives full of love,

using an account that can never be overdrawn because Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead for our sake so that we might have a share in the life of God who is complete love.

This is no wind up and we might not fully understand what is going on but we are all winners. So let us believe in our great good fortune and rejoice always in the Lord.

Alleluia Christ is risen!

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