

# FAR

## ABOVE RUBIES



### Who shall roll away the stone?

Of all of the events in the Church calendar, Easter is most certainly my favourite as we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of my fondest memories is that of attending the dawn service at the garden tomb in Jerusalem on Easter Sunday morning. When my husband Richard and I arrived at the entrance to the garden at around 5:00 am we expected to see a few people gathered, but were amazed to find hundreds of excited Christians queuing up! There was a real buzz about the place as people chatted and looked forward to the service with joyful anticipation. It made me question just how much we look forward to going to Church, where Jesus' presence is as real as when He revealed Himself to Mary.

Unfortunately the experience of Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, on their way to the tomb after Jesus' crucifixion, was not one of joy and excitement, but of sadness and despair. Mark 16 v 1 tells us that they had *"brought spices so that they might go and anoint Him."* Even though Jesus had stated on several occasions that He must suffer and be killed and after three days rise again (Mark 8 v 31), it really hadn't sunk in. They had prepared for the worst. Their hope was gone because they had watched Jesus die.

As you enter the garden tomb today you cannot help but be moved by the inscription on the door which states *"He is not here for He is risen"* taken from Matt. 28 v 6. We can rejoice because we know from God's word and history that Jesus died on the cross and rose again on the third day. It was a different set of circumstances, however, for the women as they made their way to the tomb. They were totally unaware that the resurrection had taken place; and their main worry, and thrust of their conversation was, *"Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"* (Mark 16 v 3). All of their worrying was in vain. God had already moved away the stone and Jesus was alive!

Throughout our lives we will face many difficult circumstances, but worrying about them will not change the situation one iota. What it will do, however, is affect you! Worry and anxiety will constantly drain you of the energy God has given you. It will generally affect your sleep, your appetite and you may experience difficulty making decisions. We tend to focus on the problem rather than take it to the One who has the solution. I have heard some Christians joke, "Why pray when you can worry?", and sadly for some prayer is a last resort. Our problems can seem like huge stones weighing us down, but we need to remember that there is no stone too big for Jesus to handle and no burden too heavy for Him to carry.

I read recently that an average person's anxiety is focussed as follows: 40% about things that will never happen, 30% about things in the past that we cannot change, 12% about criticism – mostly untrue, 10% about our health which usually gets worse with stress, and 8% about real problems that we will face. Makes you think, doesn't it?!

Using everyday examples Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 v 25 and v 32, "*..do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on... for your heavenly Father knows that you need them all*" and in verse 27 He asks, "*Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?*" Worrying can never change a situation but prayer can. Worrying is not trusting. We need to heed Paul's words in Phil. 4 v 6-7, "*Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*"

In Matt.6 v 34 Jesus says, "*Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.*" God gives us sufficient grace to get through each day, one day at a time. How often do we lose our peace and joy worrying about tomorrow and then wonder what we were worrying about? Corrie ten Boom puts it like this, "*Worry doesn't empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.*" A few years ago a dear friend gave me this little poem which I have found very helpful.

*In today's bright sunshine basking, leave tomorrow's cares alone.  
Spoil not present joy by asking "Who shall roll away the stone?"  
Oft before we've faced the trial we have come with joy to own  
Angels have from heaven descended and have rolled away the stone.  
Anon.*