

## **Bennoch church: 27th March 2016 (Easter)**

Anyone here heard of Jeff Markin? Let me tell you part of his story. These are not my words, they are taken from the internet:

*Jeff Markin was a dead man. In fact, he was officially declared dead at 8:05 a.m. in a Florida hospital ER. The date was Oct. 20, 2006. By the time Dr. Crandall, cardiologist arrived at the ER, Markin's heart had already been shocked six times with the defibrillator. Just to make sure, his non-beating heart received a seventh shock, also to no avail. Rounds of medications and other efforts had all failed to revive the patient.*

*After they had worked feverishly for 40 minutes trying to bring Jeff's heart out of a flat line they had to finally call the time of death and walk away from the corpse.*

*That would have been the end of a disappointing but not terribly unusual heart attack case. But as Dr. Chauncey Crandall was walking away after filling out some paperwork he sensed the Holy Spirit's voice saying that he should pray for the now officially dead heart attack victim.*

*By this time Jeff Markin's body was being prepared for the morgue. Dr. Crandall walked in there and began praying for Jeff Markin. Another doctor walked in and Dr. Crandall persuaded*

*him to once again apply the defibrillators and see if the body could be shocked back to life. Despite the utter hopelessness of the situation the protesting doctor did as he was asked out of respect to his colleague. Miraculously, Jeff's heart responded beautifully with a perfect heartbeat and Jeff began breathing again.*

*He was brought back to life by faith, prayer, and one more try using conventional medicine. Thus he would live to tell about his experience while physically dead. Miraculously Jeff not only came back to life but also did not sustain any brain damage.*

What is the greatest challenge of Easter? Is it about suspending our intellect, that says the dead stay dead. Or is it accepting at face value, the possibility of the impossible? There may be a very good medical, rational explanation for what happened to Jeff Markin, or do we take what happened to him at face value, that God intervened in that man's life and miraculously he was brought back from the dead.

Easter does not sit comfortably upon the rational mind. The scientific age raises its questions against the Easter event: was Jesus really dead as he was taken from the cross and placed in the tomb? He then walked away, never to be seen again, to claims of resurrection. Did the disciples snatch the body away and raise a myth of a man raised to life?

It all boils down to how do we understand 'resurrection'? I wonder, if we miss the miracle of resurrection every day? Have you thought of that. The possibility that resurrection actually happens every day! Think of the moments, events in our lives, which transform us, which offer us new possibilities. Something that happens to us which puts a smile on our face, challenges our thinking or changes how we understand the world. Are these not resurrection moments? I am suggesting that the wonder of we call the miraculous, is actually part of our everyday lives. It is just that don't see them, because our vision is not focused on the normality of the miraculous; we don't hear them, because our ears are not attuned to what God is doing in our world, every day. We don't understand them, because our minds are seeking only the great miracles of God. Is life not miraculous in itself, full of resurrection experiences?

I wonder if can only understand Easter in the context that resurrection is part of life. If we believe that God made the world from the very beginning, with the plan of salvation, then resurrection was already built into that creation. So resurrection was and is always possible. It does not matter if Jeff was dead or not, the miraculous was seen to take place.

I wonder if the disciples believed in resurrection? Answers, no more than 1500 words, to me by the end of the month. Let me give you a clue. By their actions, the answer to the question is clearly, no! They did not! At the cross where were they? Hiding

in a room? Who went to the tomb. The women. Where were the disciples? They were hiding in a room! If anyone was going to believe in resurrection then surely it was going to be these guys. They had after all, lived with Jesus for 3 years. With prime seats to watch his miracles. Believing in resurrection has never been easy! The challenge of faith to the rational mind that says the dead stay dead. It is only the spirit of God that stretches our minds, that speaks out of love and into hearts, and talks about the impossible possibility of resurrection.

Easter and resurrection are questions that cannot be answered. If we give an explanation, then we deny the miraculous. Faith leaves us hanging in the air. Unsure, yet certain. Full of hope, yet knowing that the pilgrim journey is one into the unknown. Resurrection is a sign post on a map we have yet to understand. It gives direction from the resurrected Jesus, who said, *come, follow me*.

I don't know what actually happened to Jeff Markin. It is not that important. I don't know what actually happened to Jesus of Nazareth and that is the challenge of Easter. God has never made it easy for his people to follow, but that is why it is worth the journey.

There is a book with a great title, never actually read it, "*We make the road by walking*" and what better place to begin, than resurrection. Amen.