

Easter Story

Story

Let me tell you a story. This story is about a boy. And this is kind of a true story but kind of not, so I'm calling him Simon.

Age?

Well, Simon was the son of a man who has been famous throughout the world for 2000 years, because he's in the Bible, and his name was Lazarus. And, we can reasonably assume that Lazarus had children so let's tell the story from his son's point of view.

Can anyone tell us why Lazarus is famous? What happened to him? Died and Jesus brought him back to life.

Which is an amazing story which I haven't time to tell you this morning.

But you can understand that Simon loved Jesus utterly and completely. And it was not long after his father had died and come back to life that Jesus came again to Simon's house, and there was a big party that night and the next morning everybody in the household walked with Jesus up the road to Jerusalem – well, Jesus was riding on a donkey. What a day that was! People saw that it was Jesus coming, and they started shouting and singing, and Simon ran and got palm branches to wave and he'd never felt so happy.

Only a few days later, however, Lazarus came home from Jerusalem very worried, talking about how everyone was arguing and people were afraid of what might happen, but surely Jesus would get out of town before anything bad happened, thought Simon.

But when Simon woke up on Friday morning he woke to the sound of crying. Not again! He panicked. Only his mum was home, everyone else had gone up Jerusalem in the night, apparently Jesus had been arrested. And no, he was NOT allowed to go on his own. It was a terrible day for Simon, just waiting, afraid, miserable. But he just knew that Jesus would be OK, after all he had brought Simon's father back to life. No one could kill him.

Late that day, Mary, Martha and Lazarus arrived home, dragging themselves, holding each other up. They looked dreadful. Simon couldn't believe what they told him, that Jesus had been hung on a cross, and had died. No one got much sleep that night. And all the next day Simon kept telling them it couldn't be true, Jesus would be fine, but more and more people arrived at the house, each with the same story, until Simon had to run away and hide and cry and cry.

Simon slept late on Sunday morning, quite exhausted. And when he woke up his father said that his mother and aunts Mary and Martha were up at the tomb looking after Jesus' body. Neither of them felt like eating breakfast. But as they sat on the front step saying nothing much, they could hear running, and someone yelling. Then aunt Mary came flying around the corner, "He's gone, he's gone. He's alive! He's alive!". And she swept Simon up in her arms and swung him around and around and hugged Lazarus. When they got her calmed down enough to talk straight she told them how they had gone to put the spices on Jesus' body, but it wasn't there, and how some angels had spoken to them and told them that "He is not here, he has been raised", and Simon wanted to run out and look for him straight away but Mary said 'no, he's not there'. And Simon got all confused. If Jesus had been raised from the dead then he'll be here soon and we'll all have lunch and everything will be back to normal. But Mary just said 'No, Simon. It's all different now. Jesus is alive, but not the same.'

Then she went quiet for a while. Simon could see she was thinking hard, and when she spoke it felt like Jesus was there but not there.

"Oh, Jesus", she said, "I'm sorry. You told us, didn't you. You told us, over and over, that you were going to die, that you had to die. I just didn't want to hear it."

Suddenly Simon jumped up and ~~disappeared~~ *ran off*. A moment later he came back holding something in his hand.

"It's the seed, I get it now!"

Mary looked puzzled, and Simon showed her a tiny seed.

"Don't you remember?" He asked, "That story Jesus told us about the seed, about how it had to go down deep into the ground and die so that it could sprout and grow and grow heaps more seeds. I picked up this seed on the way home and kept it. He was talking about HIMSELF!!"

Simon and his aunt Mary sat there on their front doorstep, him wrapped in her arms, ready for the people, the excitement, the questions, the dramas that lay ahead of them.

Song: 'Lord I lift your name on high', dance moves.