**Making Easter personal: Raised with Christ**

discussion guide

based on **Colossians 3.1-14** (Linked to sermon of 30/4/17)

which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

**Intro**: If it’s the first time your group have met in a few weeks, share something that God has been doing which has encouraged you / challenged you etc.

**Read Colossians 3.1-14**

Dan used the illustration of a shoebox marked ‘Jesus’ into which he put a piece of paper marked ‘me’ – to signify the statement from v3 that “your life is now hidden with Christ in God”. Elsewhere, Paul frequently talks about being ‘in Christ’ – an equivalent phrase.

Step 1: we died with Christ (Col 2.20; 3.3) – the shoebox was ‘buried’. Sin / the earthly nature has no power over us anymore. The old temptations and sins that rear their head are like zombies – giving the pretence of being alive, but really dead. We’re to ‘put those things to death’ (v5) and ‘rid yourselves of all such things’ (v7-9).

[If you want to, read Romans 6.1-14 for more detail on this.]

What is it like to think of your pre-Christian self as ‘dead’?

Step 2: we were raised with Christ (3.1; see also 2 Corinthians 5.17) – the shoebox was ‘raised’. As people raised with Christ, we are to put on the character of Jesus (v12-14).

Why is it important to remember that we’re ‘God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved’ as we go on clothing ourselves with Jesus’ character (v12-14)?

Step 3: we ascended with Christ (implied in 4; spelled out in Ephesians 2.6) – the shoebox ‘ascended’ higher. So we’re to set our hearts and minds on things above – not on earthly things (v1-2).

The new creation (butterfly) drinks nectar; the old creation (caterpillar) eats leaves. We shouldn’t feed the old appetites (sin), but the new appetites (growing closer to God through Bible, prayer and worship etc).

Dan suggested that the more we feed the new appetites, the less the old appetites appeal. Have you seen that to be true in your life? If so, how?

Step 4: we will appear with Christ (v4). Our eternal home is guaranteed!

**Up**: Dan suggested the more we’re involved in mission (out), the more we’ll need to set our hearts and minds on God (up), to counter the hopelessness and sin and emptiness we’ll encounter in mission. How could you set your heart on things above? How could you set your mind on things above?

**In**: What could you do to help each other remember the truths of this passage, and to make sure we view ourselves as God views us? What could you do to help each other put sin to death?

**Out**: A colleague dismisses Christianity as ‘just a load of rules and regulations’. In the light of this passage, how would you respond? What else would you add?

**Pray**:

Pray for our new PCC members - Peter Craggs (leadership warden), Helen Bathard, Sam Taylor, Hannah Brown, Molly Robinson (youth rep), Chris Lockwood (buildings warden).

Pray for our nation as we get ready for a General Election.

If you want, use the words from this new ‘creed’ that was used on Sunday:

I believe that I am in Christ

**and that my life is hidden with Christ in God.**

I believe Christ was crucified, died and was buried

**and that I died with Christ.**

I believe that on the third day, Christ rose again

**and that I was raised with Christ.**

I believe Christ ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father

**and that I am seated in the heavenly realms with him.**

I believe Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead

**and I will appear with Christ in glory.**

**Hallelujah!**