

- 1 Samuel 28:3-12 and 1 Corinthians 15:12-21 were read during the service

## Quotations

- Don't know whether you noticed the quotes before the service!
- *I am not afraid of dying, I just don't want to be there when it happens* (Woody Allen)
- *A wife had inscribed on her husband's tombstone: 'Thou art at rest - until we meet again'*
- *The world is a very dangerous place - you never get out of it alive!*
- *We die only once, and for such a long time* (Moliere)
- *Jesus, the world's worst funeral director: he broke up every funeral he ever attended, including his own*
- *In this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes* (Benjamin Franklin)

### Popular Culture and death

- Popular understanding, rarely explicitly stated, draws on the popular poem by Henry Scott Holland:
- *Death is nothing at all.  
I have only slipped away to the next room.  
I am me and you are you, whatever we were to each other we are that still.*

*Call me by my old familiar name.  
Speak to me in the easy way, which you always used.  
Put no difference into your tone.  
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.  
Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together.*

*Play, smile, think of me, and pray for me.  
Let my name be ever a household word that it always was.  
Let it be spoken without effort, without the ghost of a shadow in it.  
Life means more than it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was.  
There is absolute unbroken continuity...*

*Why should I be out of your mind because I am out of your sight?  
I am but waiting for you, for an interval somewhere,  
very near, just around the corner.*

*All is well. (Henry Scott Holland, 1847-1918)*

- Somehow, vaguely, everything will be all right...  
- we will be reunited with our loved ones (but no one says where)

## Saul and the Witch of Endor

- Perhaps unfamiliar account!
- Key point is: *what was Saul looking for?*
  - he was afraid, unsure, and wanted reassurance, guidance...
  - and he looked beyond the grave for that touch
  - he needed something to cling onto
- But Saul's chosen path won't lead us to a freedom from fear, to insights on life that are true
  - for what we have is the account of *God making an exception*, and revealing what something of what is behind the curtain of death
  - medium... *familiar...* *Samuel the real thing*, not the familiar
  - but, yes there is life beyond the grave!

## The Resurrection of Jesus

- For the Christian, the touchstone of all our thinking about life after death is that

Jesus rose!

- **was certainly dead** - spear in the side, blood & water, probably separation fluids which only happens after death

- **is certainly alive!** - authorities not produce body? **disciples hallucinating? and dying for it? first hand accounts, from multiple sources and multiple independent eye-witnesses, involving physical touch and eating (up to several hundred, see 1 Cor 15:6) steal the body?!**

- Evidence is compelling that Jesus rose from death!
- And Paul's claim is simple...
  - any hope in life beyond the grave stands or falls on the reality of Jesus' resurrection
  - if that is a myth, then so is any hope that there might be for us!
- You see, some folk in Corinth had been saying: "**there's nothing after death, live for today!**"
  - Paul says "**the logical conclusion of that is that even Jesus didn't rise!**" (v.13)
  - **but he did rise!** (v.20)
  - and so resurrection has come to those who will trust him! (v.21)
- *Jesus speaks of a heaven and a hell (although we need to dismiss those Sunday School images from our minds). Heaven is eternity spent with God, where the overwhelming reality will be God himself. Hell is to spend eternity without God. God doesn't send anyone to hell. Indeed he says 'over my dead body', but if we choose to ignore God in this life he will accept our choice and we will be separated from him for ever.*
- *Although it would initially appear attractive if everyone went to heaven, it is quite an appalling thought. It would mean it doesn't matter what you do on earth because ultimately you'll be all right. That would be a terrible world to live in. If there is a God and we are judged for what we do, part of that judgement must make a distinction between right and wrong. Choices on earth carry consequences.*
- "**Eat & drink, for tomorrow we die!**"
  - **NO!** - for there is hope, purpose, meaning and direction in the new life Jesus offers!
  - there is hope in the face of death, the hope of a real reuniting with Jesus himself and with those who also love him, rather than the separation of rejecting him