

***Resurrection Hope***  
**Dr Simon Perry**

As many of you know, I missed the last service of last term because I was hurriedly preparing to go out to Poland to work at a refugee support hub. And over Easter I went back to Poland and travelled further east to the reception centre nearest the Ukraine border. I worked at a train station in a town called Pzemysl – which most of you will have seen on various news reports. The station was packed, and the queues were long and slow. And the reason the station was packed was not because there were so many folk fleeing Ukraine. But there were so many Ukrainians trying to get back into their own country. Some, because they had been threatened with losing their jobs if they did not return. Some because they missed loved ones who they had left behind. And some – perhaps most surprising of all - because it was Easter – and they wanted to spend Easter with the people they loved.

The people I met, possibly because they were in the worst circumstances imaginable, embodied a level of hope you very rarely see. Because we use the language of hope quite lightly. As though hope means being a bit upbeat or optimistic. Or we talk about our hopes and dreams, once we've penetrated whatever glass ceiling stands between us and our desires. But for those I worked with, upbeatness and optimism are irrelevant. For many the worse has already happened. Hopes and dreams, along with glass ceilings and the buildings they are in, now lie in a dusty mound of smouldering debris.

And maybe smouldering debris is where real hope lies. This was certainly the case for Jesus of Nazareth. All was lost. The kingdom of God was defeated. Political love loses, helpless against the power games of despots and tyrants. All is lost. Good Friday. But on Good Friday, the queue in the train station at Pzemysl was long. And in that queue, were many, many folk who carried scars, who carried all their belongings in shopping bags, but who were on their way to celebrate resurrection hope.

Because resurrection hope does not avert its gaze from real trauma.

And resurrection hope is not based on ludicrously upbeat idealism.

And resurrection hope offers a lens to see the world as it really is, in all its ugliness, and violence, despair. To see the world as it really is, without flinching. Because maybe it is only when we dare to see the world as it really is, that we experience what hope really is.

I won't try to define hope, because if you experience it, you need no definition.