

We used to live in Huntly. It's a brave confession. But on resurrection Sunday, it's a day for brave confessions. It's just the time to step out of the darkness into the light, lay your burdens down, get everything off your chest. We used to live in Huntly.

The thing with Huntly and much of the northern Waikato, is that it can be foggy. Very foggy in fact. So foggy, some days it never lifts. You wake up and out the window, it's misty and whiteish. Outside the air is wet and damp. Your clothes will glisten and catch the light if you linger out for long, and it's cold.

If you look out at lunch time, it's just the same. You can't see the neighbours. You hold your coffee close, thank the Lord Jesus for your wood burner and supply of dry gum you brought over summer, and go back to being inside.

At tea time, you do the same thing and the only thing that's changed, is that you can't see to the edge of your section or the fence that separates you from the grass verge and the road, it's now getting dark and the fog has gotten thicker, because it's even colder. You offer thanks again for all you have: the fire, insulation, warm clothes, food and that blessed coffee.

The mist covers everything and when you are down deep in the middle of it, you really are covered.

In the winter, that's often what it's like. You drive around and that's all you see, whiteish, misty fog.

But if you are coming to Auckland as we often did, you can find times when you leave home in that white wet and cold mist, but after about 40 minutes, when you get to the Bombay hills and start climbing, just as you get near the top ... you break free.

The mist is gone, the sky is blue and the sun is shining. It's genuinely as if you'd broken free of the underworld and headed straight into heaven. The contrast is remarkable. If you stop and turn around, look back the way you have come, you can see blue sky, green hills and sunshine ... and the rest of the land ... shrouded in mist ... aotearoa ... the land of the long white cloud.

It really is quite beautiful and yet unnerving; in a split second you have gone from darkness to light. From gloom to brightness. From whiteish, grey to colour. From not seeing but for a few metres ... to being able to see all the way to the sun and back.

It's almost as if a shroud covering all peoples has been destroyed. A sheet spread over all nations has been removed. The oppression of the devil has been healed.

It's almost as if the stone that covered the tomb has been rolled away. A feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines has been hosted. That in every nation those who fear him and do what is right are acceptable.

It's almost as if Angels speak ... The disgrace of his people has been taken away. That all tears have been wiped from all faces.

It's almost as if gladness and rejoicing are everywhere. That anyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins. That Peace has come.

It's almost as if death has been swallowed forever....

It's almost as if Jesus has been raised from the dead.

We used to live in Huntly. And we drove to Auckland Monday to Friday to go to work. The mist wasn't very nice, it was cold and clammy. It made your clothes wet. It meant driving was dangerous and you always had to keep concentrating on what was happening. All the time. When you got home and the mist had hung around all day, it was dark and freezing inside and out, and you had to have good heating or you'd suffer terribly. Dry firewood was like gold.

It did get dreary if it went on for too long and you didn't see the sun.

But on the days, you broke through that whiteish, greyish gloom, into the brightness of the heavenly light, the blue and green and sun of the Pukekohe surrounds ... you felt like you had been unshrouded, unsheeted, set free, and that the stone had been rolled away.

You saw, and felt like you had been resurrected ... and it was dazingly awesome.

It was a tiny likeness of what today is all about.

We used to live in Huntly, ... but it wasn't all bad.

Amen.