

Last Saturday I went to see the movie Vantage point at Hoyts Morehouse.

I needed to relax. And Vantage Point, advertised as a mix of action, drama, thriller, seemed a good option.

Vantage Point is about the attempted assassination of the American president. And it's fascinating as a movie, because it tells the story from 8 different points of view; first through TV camera, then a US Presidential protection squad. Next a local cop, then a visiting tourist. Then innocent bystander to plotting terrorist.

8 stories, all providing new information, all about the one event. It's promoted as 8 points of view. One truth.

And the movie helped me make sense of Easter Sunday. Because in the Bible, the one truth about the Easter story is told in four gospels. 4 points of view, one truth.

If you read Mark, **<<ppt>>you get a story of fear and trembling.**

As it says in Mark 16:8: *When the women ran from the tomb, they were confused and shaking all over. They were too afraid to tell anyone what had happened*

Mark is the shortest of the 4 gospel's. It's the simplest. It's telling the basic facts. And so Mark's resurrection covers 8 verses. Solely through women's eyes.

Ending with fear and trembling. So would you if you were on a secret mission to anoint the body of a condemned criminal.

Only to find an empty tomb. But then if you go asking the authorities who snatched the body, you're likely to be arrested.

Cue the perspective of Matthew. **<<ppt>>Earthquakes and angels.**

And Matthew's point of view is different from Mark's. Just like the movie Vantage Point. Matthew takes 20 verses, not 8. Matthew mentions 2 earthquakes. And Matthew has his own style. His own personality. Matthew has a favourite little saying, the Greek word *idou*, (Lo), scattered throughout his gospel. It makes an appearance 6x in this resurrection story.

Like Mark, you get the feeling that Matthew is scratching his head. Where's the body gone? Maybe it was stolen. It's an invented rumour that Matthew mentions.

Mark and Matthew. Scratching their heads. Each, from their own perspective, trying to make sense of the truth of the one event, this empty tomb.

Then there is Luke, **<<ppt>>Burning hearts**

When we read Luke, we note 53 verses on this resurrection. We again find a unique style. Matthew loved the Greek word *idou*. Luke loved the Greek word *dei*, it is necessary. It appears throughout his book, and four times in this last, resurrection, chapter.

Luke decides not to cover the stolen body rumour mill urban legend. But he does include the story of Emmaus Road. And that's Luke's heart, his whole book seems to be about people walking, people travelling, journeying with Jesus.

So again, like Matthew and Mark, Luke is telling the one story from his vantage point.

Again, like Matthew and Mark, he has the same essentially basic details, an empty tomb, first seen by women, who are left scratching their head.

Then there is John: <<ppt>>**new day and new tasks**,

John is Mr. Detail. 2 whole chapters. John tells us what happened Easter evening. And the Easter evening after that. And what was on the breakfast menu in Galilee. Much more dialogue and speech making in John. Much more detailed closeups of Mary Magdalene and of Thomas.

John does a lot more theological work with the resurrection. John is linking Jesus as Creator in John 1 with Jesus as a new Creation in John 20 and 21. Resurrection in John is no longer just personal. It's not just for people. It's also for planet.

But still the woman. Disturbed to discover an empty tomb.

4 stories. Own language, own style. Just like the movie Vantage Point. Each told from their own point of view.

These 4 stories help me believe in the resurrection. Because if you were a follower of a dead Jesus in the 1st century, wanting to play make believe, you'd do a better job of getting the 4 stories straight.

You'd also do a better job of finding more credible eyewitnesses. Because if you're making up a resurrection, don't use women. No-one believes them. Here's the ancient philosopher Plato on woman: *Every free born man has intelligence but doesn't know how to use it. Every free born woman has intelligence but will never learn know how to use it. And every slave born man or woman has no intelligence.*

In other words, if you're making up a story, spinning a bit of make believe, don't use woman, who can never learn to use their intelligence, as eyewitnesses.

Unless it's true. Unless you have no choice but to include, because they were there.

4 different perspectives on one truth, the empty tomb of a resurrected Jesus.

The movie Vantage Point had a 5, 6th, 7th, perspective. And then it ended with a final, overall, pulling it all together, big picture perspective. Complete with car chase. Of course.

So jump with me to the 8th and last. The big picture perspective on the resurrection of Jesus.

Words of NT Wright, the events of Easter Sunday are no less than "a full, recreated life in the presence and love of God, a totally renewed creation, an integrated new heavens and new earth, and a complete humanness ... in worship and love for God, in love for one another as humans, in stewardship over God's world."

In other words, resurrection is much more than an empty tomb. It's much more than going to heaven when you die.

That's the big picture. That because of today, our relationship with God, with people and with this planet are totally different.

It's Ezekiel 37; the valley of dry bones, that will come to life. God's people returning from exile. It's Revelation. With new heavens and new earth, and Christ among us, for the healing for the nations. That's the 8th, big picture perspective.

Which might seem a bit abstract and airy fairy. So jump with me. Back to the 5th, 6th and 7th perspectives. What does resurrection mean for us today? What does it mean for us, for others, for our city.

So I asked Paul, one of our pastoral team, this week. Paul, what does resurrection mean for you, personally, today? *Paul tells his story and then places a flower on the map.*

I asked Craig. What does resurrection mean for others, for families? *Craig tells his story and then places a flower on the map.*

I asked myself. What does resurrection mean for our city, for the way we work? Inspired by this story.... *Steve tells his story and then places a flower on the map.*

Conclusion: I started with the movie Vantage Point. 8 stories. 1 truth. I found it helped me understand Easter Sunday and the resurrection.

You need all 8. You need all 4 gospels. You need each of us, living the 5th, 6th, 7th, living the resurrection in our personal lives, in our families, in our workplaces in the city. You need the 8th story, the big picture, the Christian hope of the resurrected Jesus and the new heavens and the new earth.

Invite you to respond: There are plants in the shoes. Plants are a sign of new life. They are potential. They are colour. There are maps of Christchurch.

Invite you to respond to resurrection. Take a flower and come a place it on your part of the city. To find your home, your church, your workplace, place the plant. As a prayer. He will be risen. He will be risen. He will be risen indeed.