

The Resurrection (Luke 24:1-12)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of evil ones, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

TA DA!!

A Sunday school teacher asked "What do you think were Jesus first words when He came out of that tomb?"

A little girl shouted excitedly "I know!"

"Bethany what did he say."

Extending her arms high into the air she said: "TA DA!"

No matter how prepared we think we are, we are never quite prepared for the shock of resurrection. It reveals God's satisfaction in the Son and his mission. It proves that Jesus' way of living is eternal and enduring, and that death cannot thwart God's purposes.

Nobody goes to a tomb expecting it to be empty. We go for other reasons. We go to pay our last respects, to remember the dead, to display one final act of love, that is, to express grief for the loss of the beloved.

This is the mood of the women approaching the tomb...heart-broken, wallowing in grief and despair. Meanwhile, at the very moment the women were approaching the tomb, Jesus' male disciples were locked away in hiding, in fear for their lives, doing everything possible to distance themselves from Jesus.

The mood was dark, with no hope of lifting up. The disciples knew what we all know too well – dead people remain dead. We know the women were going to the tomb saying to themselves, ‘Well, we’ve got the spices in case he’s still dead, but let’s hope he’s alive again.’ They were bringing the spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They were coming to pay last respects for the dead. They seek the dead among the dead, not the living among the dead.

The surprise began with their arrival at the tomb:

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were puzzling about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”

Their message is simple: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” It runs counter to everything the women believe to be true. It is so outrageous that when the women run from the empty tomb to tell Jesus’ male disciples, they are hardly believed. The disciples thought the message was complete nonsense and that the women were delirious.

And this is where our situation is like that of the women: we are all given a message of resurrection, which flies in the face of what we know to be true.

The angel’s message continues: “Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” The angel is sort of saying: “You should have known better. Don’t you remember his words? Jesus told you all about this, and since he’s not one to tell you, ‘I told you so,’ we will – He told you so!”

The messengers remind them that if they can remember them, Jesus’ own words provide the interpretation of this otherwise puzzling event of his bodily disappearance.

This doesn’t mean the message is easy to believe. All that Jesus said makes sense in view of the hope of resurrection. It was only after the resurrection that Jesus’ disciples remembered and understood. Everything became clear to them when they remembered Jesus’ words.

We do the same!

There are things we have trouble understanding the first time around, but as we listen again and again, as we recognize who is speaking, and as we consider Jesus'

words in light of the resurrection, we come to deeper understanding of the faith once delivered to the disciples. The resurrection changes everything!

Yesterday, Good Friday, we heard these words from Scripture: "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." Jesus was not simply stating the obvious - that his earthly life was over. He was declaring that our sins were forgiven once and for all, their price paid by his sacrifice. When he said, 'It is finished,' he was talking about you and me. **We are saved! We are free! What greater love is there!**

Easter is always a surprise. Jesus' disciples were just as unprepared for this event as we would have been. The Easter message is that Jesus lives - the very life and love of God has come among us in the person of Jesus. And He is here **NOW!!**

The women came looking for a dead Jesus, but quickly discovered they were looking in the wrong place. They were looking for the dead when they should have been seeking the living Jesus.

The world has been turned upside down by the Resurrection. We move from despair to hope, fear to joy, darkness to light. The life and death of a first-century Jew named Jesus makes a difference. **Easter is coming – it's already here.**

What are we seeking this here this evening? Did we come seeking the dead among the dead? Or did we come to seek life from the living, risen Jesus?

May we experience the brightness of the 'Son-shine' and let this coming morning brings us to the true peace and joy of Easter.

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