

Living In Jesus' Resurrection

Luke 24: 1-13, Easter 2022

CHRIST IS RISEN! He is risen indeed! Let's begin again as if our entire lives depended upon the answer - for indeed they do
CHRIST IS RISEN! He is risen indeed!

Today, as we worship, we have been using two of the most ancient of Christian proclamations. This proclamation about the Risen Christ and the ancient mystery of faith, Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again. We make this declaration every time we have Holy Communion. We declared it last week, remember?

But this is the center and the heart of our faith. The absolute conviction, the knowledge - not in our heads or in some book but deep down core knowledge, about ourselves and our lives, this reality of Jesus' resurrection.

That we look around us at the difficulties of life and sometimes see only one answer - not work or government or schools or money - but the resurrection of Jesus and the Empty Tomb. Sometimes, the only hope we have to push through our difficulties and our strife, and our pain, is that. Jesus' resurrection, and that that tomb, death, has been vanquished.

We must remember that the resurrection was not something that the disciples and the women were counting on. For them, it was over - the men were hiding, lest they be executed by Pilate, and the women were carrying out their last act of friendship and devotion by anointing Jesus' body in death.

If they had been expecting the resurrection, they wouldn't have been hiding but waiting by the door to the tomb for the

resurrection miracle. That is why none of the Gospels records the how and the when of the resurrection - we assume it was around daybreak on Sunday morning and huge amounts of light are always coming out of the tomb in the pictures we have seen of the event, - but we don't know when or how - we only know who.. And the who is Jesus - resurrected from the dead into a new and eternal body.

And we're not talking about some resuscitated body like someone whose heart stops during a heart attack and is revived with the shocking paddles. Jesus does not have his old body remade like Frankenstein, with a patches of body parts and screws... This is a new eternal body - a physical body that will eat and drink with his family and friends, and apparently a body that can move from place to place instantly, as we will unpack with the rest of the Easter story in the weeks to come...

But still a body that bears the scars of his death and all of his personality and life - for in the Gospel of Matthew Mary recognizes Jesus and so do the other Apostles in the Gospel of John.

In Jesus Resurrection, God is doing something new. In Jesus' resurrection we have the answer to unlock all of the human problems - problems of doubt and fear, even violence and strife...it can all be answered in the resurrection of Jesus and the new life that God offers us.

Living in the resurrection, suddenly family can be transformed. Where there was once anger and hatred, the Love of God and forgiveness can be the guiding principles. Entire families can see the working of Jesus in their life and suddenly the struggles and strife of family can become a resurrection joy.

Work can go from being a absolute toil and drudgery, to being a vocation, to a way of helping other people and serving those around us just as Jesus told the disciples that he was their servant, on the night he was betrayed. Looking at work in light of the resurrection, co-workers are not a pain in the neck but fellow workers in the kingdom and human beings with similar needs and desires.

Living in Jesus' resurrection can change so much we do in our lives, and certainly enhance our perspective. One of my greatest joys is visiting with our shutins and talk with them about their current lives. It is clear that many of them live in Jesus's resurrection. They embrace their lives, and yes, they talk a little about their pain in their knees or backs, but they mostly talk about how content they are, how happy they are.

Their biggest concerns are usually about how their kids and grandkids are living, the problems their grandkids are dealing with in college, or in their relationships, or work, or home life. But our shutins, they are happy and at peace with their own lives. They live in Jesus' resurrection. They don't worry for themselves, and they're more in touch with their own mortality, but living in Jesus' resurrection enables them the comfort to claim their own.

The question that the young men ask the women on that dawn so long ago still rings in our ears "Why do you look for the living among the dead ? He is not here but he has gone ahead of you." And see he does go ahead of us. So much could be said of us in the same way - where do you look for the living God?

So it's my question for you this Easter: Where can you see the living God? Where can you see the hope and new life that the women testified to, on that day that they saw the tomb was empty and that Jesus was alive? Where can you see that hope in a world that seems to be spinning out of control?

Where can we look for hope - the absolute assurance that God is with us and fills the heart with gifts of love and grace? Where can we look - we can look here - in this very room - in this very place for stories of new life and re-birth - of God's hope and God's grace. And then we can begin to tell one another those stories to help us through this life and to encourage us to do more for one another and for God.

Each year for my school I have to write a list of my learning goals, things I am going to focus on for the year, to learn or accomplish. And number 4 of my learning goals for this year I just completed was To seek avenues for Hope in this current world environment and the future church.

How can I find ways of maintaining hope in a world of growing financial hardships, where shelter insecurity is looming, and that is catapulting us to a bunch of new problems, depression, drug abuse, sexual exploitation of women... how can I speak on hope Sunday after Sunday when on Wednesday I hear a new story from someone at the mission? Where do I find this hope land how do I maintain it?

Today I can write a note under that learning goal, that where I find that hope, how I can find that hope, is if I live in Jesus' resurrection. If I live that resurrection daily, and not just merely speak of it on this glorious day. If I can declare and feel in my core, every day of my life, that Christ is risen! That Christ is risen!

And because Christ is risen, so too shall we rise! We can rise beyond our uncertainties and our fears, We can rise beyond pain and loneliness, Psalm 34: 18 says 'The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.' We can rise above all the things that pull us down and that threaten to

destroy us. We can rise! When we live in Jesus' resurrection, like him, we too we can rise.

There is hope. There is hope for our lives. There is hope in the world - there is faith in the world - but we must look for it and see the resurrection of Jesus in a new light - in the light of our own lives and the choices that we make. We must look and see the hope and faith in this world, that is made possible when we look into the tomb and realize that Jesus isn't there, that Jesus is alive.

And because Jesus is alive - then we are alive also - alive to love and praise - alive to be servants of God - alive to be the ones who help change and shift the world, even if it is the world around us. God has chosen us to be the ones who see the empty tomb and then go from here to do something about it - the ones who move forward with grace and truth to help those in need and be the sign of resurrection to the world around us.

The reality of God's grace is here - present among us - present in those who live the message of the empty tomb and know in the hearts and in their lives and in their actions that Christ has died that Christ has Risen and that Christ will come again.

The message of the Empty tomb is still proclaimed - as we all run to the tomb and look in - the empty tomb is still empty and the message of God's love is still here among us. If that message of love and forgiveness does not burn within your heart, hear again the testimony of the women who went slowly and bitterly weeping to the grave expecting to find a dead body of their friend - Jesus is alive –

The world is filled with hope and there is a place where we can find hope as we wander through life - it is the empty tomb and the great proclamation of faith that Christ is Risen. Alleluia! He is Risen Indeed.

Prayer

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Risen Lord, hear our cry for help – for those surrounded by the shroud of death for those covered by the mantle of dying for those hemmed-in by illness, visible or veiled hear our cry for help... for those weighed down with worries for those carrying the burden of distress for those overwhelmed by isolation hear our cry for help...

For those who are weary for those who are tattered and worn for those who collapse from exhaustion! hear our cry for help... Risen Lord, hear our cry of thanksgiving – for the graciousness with which you hear! for the patience with which you listen for the grace with which you care hear our cry of thanksgiving...

For the ways you accompany us through deep valleys for the ways you lead us to still meadows for the ways you provide all we need. For transforming death in resurrection life! for blessing and breaking ordinary bread! for opening our eyes to recognize you hear our cry of thanksgiving...

Risen Lord, hear our cry for communities of faith – that we retain memory of being together that we embrace unity in the reality of distance that we foresee a future side-by-side, hand-in-hand hear our cry for communities of faith... that we sense purpose beyond ourselves that we perceive the needs of creation, that we stretch ourselves to respond. Hear our cries that you bless our shutins...

Hear our cry for communities of faith...that our ways be formed by Your Way! that our lives be shaped by Your Life that our love be Your Love, Amen..