



“Looking for The Living One”

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EASTER

Scripture:

Luke 24:1-12 (NRSV)

The Resurrection of Jesus

24But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The 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.’ ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.’ ⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

The Sermon:

Again, and again, and again, the gospel writer of Luke, presses the case that Jesus fulfilled the promises of Hebrew scripture in his ministry; in his teaching and healing, in his living and in his dying. He dies with the words of Psalm 31:5 on his lips. “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” He is teaching and preaching, healing and restoring to life as God would have the Jewish people healed, and restored and reconciled to God’s own heart.

Should it come as a surprise to any of us then, that Jesus, who died with the mocking title “King of the Jews” hammered on the cross above his head, is now raised by God to show God’s vindication of Jesus and his true kingship?

Though it does not say it this way in your bibles, the raising of Jesus from the dead is written in the passive voice. Your bibles and mine say that Jesus is *risen*. But the Greek says that Jesus is *raised* from the dead. Do you understand the difference? ***God is in charge here. Still and always, God is in charge;*** God has the last word, as well as the first word.

It is God who raises Jesus to the resurrected life, it is God who confirms, yet again, that the life and the death of Jesus are not futile, but of utter value and importance.

Jesus, we learn, is triumphant over pain, and suffering, and loss and has left the tomb of death empty;

Jesus is indeed the conqueror of death;

Jesus is the savior of the world through his love and faithfulness;

He is the Risen One;

He is our King of Glory;

Our Joy to the world;

Jesus is the Living One who brings peace on earth and good will to all.

“The tomb is empty”, the messengers who gleam and flash like lightning, tell the women.

The tomb is empty.

Do not look for the Living One among the dead.

And for all that glory, and wonder, and mystery...the disciples, (the male disciples of course!)...consider what the women are saying as nothing but “an idle tale”. They do not believe the women; even though these women have been with Jesus and the others since Galilee, been with him when he taught and healed, they have watched his suffering and crucifixion, have watched his burial, have waited through the Sabbath requirement of rest, to return to the grave and anoint the dead body of Jesus.

These women are not fools. The disciples, at this point, however, seem very foolish.

Is this how it will end?

Of course not!

Rather, these men will move from doubt and fear, and denial and foolishness, to courage and faith and hope and power...when they leave the dead past, and instead seek the Living One ahead of them, when they encounter the Living Christ.

You see, the story goes on beyond an empty tomb!

Jesus comes to the disciples as they grieve in their daily walk, as they hide in their rooms, as they struggle in their confusion, remorse, anger and despair.

On the Emmaus road, two of the disciples recognize him in the breaking of the bread, and feel their hearts burn with hope and joy. Jesus is still with them.

He comes as Life, as Hope, as Promise of God Fulfilled. He is the Living One, the Resurrected Christ. When he comes among the disciples, he comes with the words: “Peace be with you.” (24:36)

- Jesus is found in the retelling of the stories and the sharing in bread and cup.
- He is found in living the call to love and to justice.
- He is alive in each act of care, in each moment of forgiveness and reconciliation. He is there in the restoring of relationships to love and peace.
- He is known to us in mystical communion and in song, in beauty, and in prayer. He is there when vengeance is overthrown in mercy.
- He embraces the lost and the marginalized, he calls us to a banquet table where all are fed, and all are welcome.

- He promises to change the world, and with each and every one of us, and in the power of God's Holy Spirit that will strengthen us.

Ah Holy Jesus, most blessed Living One!

Death cannot hold him.

Human sin cannot stop him.

Violence cannot subdue him.

Decay has nothing to do with him.

The Kingdom of God is found in him.

Hope is restored through him.

Easter morning is glorious because of him!

Alleluia, alleluia! Amen.