

Remember the Good News!

Easter Sermon - April 17, 2022

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Luke 24:1-12

<sup>1</sup>On the first day of the week, at early dawn, [the women] came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup>But 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.

*God calls us to remember the truth about Jesus’ resurrection. His rising is the Good News we need today for our living and the complex world we live in. Our hope lies in the living Jesus who is with us each day.*

Have you heard the news? It’s true, it is true! Let us rejoice! Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

I’m going to need your help preaching this morning. When I say, “Christ is Risen!” Please respond with: He is Risen indeed!

Yet, it wasn’t news at first. Mary, Joanna and Mary with the others, who had been at the empty tomb, went back to tell the disciples what they saw and heard. “Listen,” they said, “The stone was rolled away. The tomb was empty!”

Did they tell how they felt when they first saw the tomb had been disturbed? What about the dazzling, shiny clothes of the two men? Did they share how completely terrified they were when the men began speaking to them? Whatever Mary, Joanna and Mary said, the disciples don’t believe them.

An idle tale? A silly story full of nonsense? An unfounded, baseless account about an empty tomb. Jesus Christ, Son of God, has just broken the bonds of time and space and its only nonsense?

No! Christ is Risen! He is Risen, indeed!

Except for Peter who goes to the grave to look, we'll give the rest of the disciples a pass. It wasn't real to them just yet. The Good News of Jesus transcending the grave hadn't become factual. They couldn't believe it.

We have the same challenge you know. In our 24/7 media world, news comes at us like we're drinking from a firehose. There are times when it is hard to distinguish between real news and fake news.

None of us needs fake news. The world is too complex and too divided. We need the Gospel, Good News, the kind of which is entirely true.

Here it is. Jesus Christ, Son of God, came to walk this earth, living and loving people. He was arrested. He was put on trial. His death was a gruesome crucifixion at the hands of the Roman state and his body was laid in a new tomb. Early one morning, two thousand years ago, the women that were closest to Jesus, discovered His body wasn't in the tomb. He later appeared to the disciples and the women several times, proving to them He was fully alive. The scriptures attested to by men and women for centuries tell of God's work. Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection completely changed history and it changes our lives today.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Here's how the Risen Christ changes our lives. We are changed when we recall everything about Jesus; His words and His love. just as the men told the Marys' at the tomb. 'Remember what He told you...'

Jesus said things like, "Love your neighbor as yourself." And "I am the way, the truth and the life." He welcomed the little children, when in that day, children were not to be seen. Jesus touched and healed lepers; the unclean ones. He welcomed people on the fringes of society. He forgave people when they had done really bad things. Then He said to the people, "Turn the other cheek. Forgive each other." At the Last Supper, before His arrest, He even said to the disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me." God changes us as we learn Jesus' ways and love like He did. We remember Him.

The act of remembering for some of us, is easier than for others. There were three sisters living together ages 96, 94, and 92. One day, the 96-year-old yelled to her sisters, “Was I putting in my dentures or taking them out?” The 94-year-old hollered back, “I don't know, I'll come and see.” She started up the stairs, but stopped on the third step. She shouted, “Was I going up or coming down?” The 92-year-old was sitting at the kitchen having tea, listening to her sisters with a smirk on her face. She shook her head and said, “I sure hope I never get that forgetful,” and knocked on wood for good measure. Then she yelled, “I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door!”<sup>1</sup>

God gave us the ability to go backwards in time and call to mind an event or person. When we're visiting the graveside of our loved one, the memories come flooding back of the sound of his laughter or her gentle voice. Suddenly we, who stand in the present are holding the presence of that person as if they were still alive. We go underneath the tomb stone to our loved one.

This is how it is with Jesus. When Mary, Joanna and Mary thought of Jesus' words, His being came into the present moment. They summon up the living Jesus who treated them with respect, who looked into their eyes with kindness, who loved all people, no matter who they were or what they had done.

Here lies our hope! On this Easter, Jesus is not dead, but fully alive. You and I encounter the living God every time we read about Jesus words and His life. Jesus Himself, comes to meet us when He says, “Come, follow me.” The Risen Lord is close every time we say, “I need you, God.” This most amazing, glorious God isn't dead at all! He is with us right now!

What hope this brings. Even death cannot hold the love of God in a tomb. For love comes bursting forth like spring flowers. Today we think about our Ukrainian sisters and brothers who are worshipping the Risen Christ. In days of war and death, they too, will take hope in God who forgives sin and promises resurrection for their dead. Everything in this life will end. But with Jesus, there is always hope: new life and new beginnings!

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

A living, resurrected God brings us the hope we need right now, today. Yet there are times in our faith lives when we **forget** the things we need to remember and **remember** the things we should forget.<sup>2</sup> (repeat) We get swept up in the fear, the

crises, and the divisions. We forget God is powerful enough to make a dead man rise. Which means, God can deal with fear, crises and divisions. Let us remember!

Then, we recall our mistakes and wrong doings, forgetting God's love forgives, no matter what we've done. God is a loving and merciful God. Therefore, we can forget our broken pasts and let it go!

On this Easter morning, we remember went to His death out of love for us. That love conquered sin and brokenness for all time. God's love burst the bonds of time and space by rising again from the dead. We live now, in the presence of Jesus who has a living relationship with us.

Believe me, this is no fake news. God's Easter story is Gospel truth. The Risen Christ brings us hope, now!

Thus, I ask you and please answer, with a resounding "yes!"

Will we remember Christ loved us and died on the cross for our lives and our sin?

Will we remember the living Jesus is with us each and every day?

Will we, like the women, tell this Gospel story, the genuine hope the world needs now?

Then let's tell it!

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Alleluia! Amen.

1 and 2

<https://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/sermons/2022/march/remember.html>