



Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day

April 16, 2017

He Is Not Here...He Is Risen!

Matthew 28:1-10

“The order of things is changed: the Tomb devours death and not the dead; the house of death becomes a mansion of life.” Chrysologus in 413 CE

It had been a long week for all. Passover was the great gathering festival as the faithful. They would come to the holy city to worship, to remember the LORD and the time when they were a people from slavery in Egypt to land of promise, milk and honey.

It had been a long week all around. The religious were exhausted; the merchants nearly sold out; and the Romans just wanted it all to be over with; these pilgrims who came from the known world and some from the county side of Galilee.

And there were some events which simply went unnoticed though word spread quickly about the rabbi from Nazareth and His once rowdy band that seemed to evaporate suddenly...nowhere to be found. Some said that they all fled just after their teacher's arrest.

Sad really what a small band of people come to believe, come to believe IN!

On this day, in a new way, my thoughts have hung on the words “Do not be afraid. He has been raised from the dead, and, yes, he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” Notice how that changes a bit when the women meet up with Jesus: “Greetings!” Just simply, HI...“Do not afraid, tell the brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

It is a reminder that it is surely about the resurrection, but it is more about mission. TO GO. TO GO to the very place of their first times of ministry with this Jesus who called them and said “Follow me.” And they did! In Galilee they will reconnect with the earthly ministry of Jesus. One writer has it: “In this Galilean meeting the disciples return to their little beginnings and in that little place their lives now break out into a huge, worldwide horizon.” (Schnackenburg)

On this day, we are ear witnesses to what they had seen first-hand. Centuries later we come and hear the story, molded from oral tradition to written word that the events around the life of Jesus were tragic at the end to bring victory and peace forever.

Matthew's telling is so lean, but the spoiler alert is found in words like "earthquake," "lightening," "stone rolled" and now a rest seat for an angel. Words like "been raised," "see," "tell," "fear and great joy," "you will see," "they will see me." Surprise and relationship; restoration and new beginnings. But, most of all, right there in Galilee, right here in Bellevue, and in the places where we tell the story, live the life, and become the Body of Christ in the world."

The story is told, not so much by data, but by effect, what happened afterwards as the news spread and the truth began to rebuild discipleship as if brand new.

In the time of Lent, I began to see Jesus anew. Not so much by what he taught or who he touched but the sheer power of His words and the authority he had carrying out the plan of God for the salvation of the world.

I have kept turning back to the simple truth of Ash Wednesday that I am dust, and to dust I know I will return, but not even that will ever take me from the loving presence of the God I know in Jesus.

In this time and in this place we see Jesus in the Word, at the Table, in this community where we keep close in the love that has first loved us and we forgive as we have been forgiven. "Heaven on earth" one of my mentors once said, "Whenever I am with my brothers and sisters in Christ, it seems He is right in the middle of us. A little like heaven on earth."

It is for us to live the story today...in our social networked, oft conflicted, age of acceleration...to live the story of this Jesus who lives in and through us. With confidence that God's plan is all sufficient... about forgiveness and new beginnings each day.

So put fear in the tomb today; never let it out. Then, walk into the pathway God has for you, for us, to tell and to live the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

How the words of Peter roar through the centuries:

"We are witnesses to all that he did...they put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead."

To this we are witnesses as we eat and drink, wine and bread, together today and hear Jesus say, "It was all FOR YOU, FOR YOU."

The Risen One goes before us, where will we meet him in the new week? Even so, come, Lord Jesus.