

Lutheran Church of the Master
580 Kuhn Road, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188
Curt Gerald, Interim Pastor
April 4, 2010
Easter 10:00

“The End of the Sabbath?”

ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΡΚΟΝ 16

¹ και διαγενομενου του σαββατου [η] μαρια η μαγδαληνη και μαρια η [του] ιακωβου και σαλωμη ηγορασαν αρωματα ινα ελθουσαι αλειψωσιν αυτον

Mark 16 (The Message)

The Resurrection

¹⁻³ When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so they could embalm him. Very early on Sunday morning, as the sun rose, they went to the tomb. They worried out loud to each other, "Who will roll back the stone from the tomb for us?"

⁴⁻⁵ Then they looked up, saw that it had been rolled back—it was a huge stone—and walked right in. They saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed all in white. They were completely taken aback, astonished.

⁶⁻⁷ He said, "Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus the Nazarene, the One they nailed on the cross. He's been raised up; he's here no longer. You can see for yourselves that the place is empty. Now—on your way. Tell his disciples and Peter that he is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You'll see him there, exactly as he said."

⁸ They got out as fast as they could, beside themselves, their heads swimming. Stunned, they said nothing to anyone.

***Prayer (from today's Daily Discipleship on our webpage copied from the ELCA's webpage)"
We praise you, O Christ, as we celebrate the good news of the resurrection. Inspire us and fill us with joy, that we might be shining witnesses to you, our risen Lord. Amen***

I concluded last night's message at our Easter Vigile with these words ...

Had Michael Buffer (he's the one who has that magnificent deep voice that announces fights and wrestling matches with the phrase for which he holds the trademark) ... had he been alive in Matthew's day, I could imagine Matthew writing Michael Buffer into this Gospel story ... so that as Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are coming to the tomb this booming voice would have thundered through the garden saying ...

“AND NOW, LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE” (*see footnote at end of sermon)...

... and the camera would be jolted as the ground rocks and reels and rumbles ...

... and the stone is jolted away from the door of the tomb and smashes into the rocks at the end of the track ...

... and this figure comes leaping out into the fresh air ...

... and the two Marys recognize that it is Jesus ...
... and Jesus is ready to go ... it isn't that his work is over ... it is really that his work has just begun in a new way ...
... the Sabbath is over ... looking back to what God has done in the Creative Past is no longer the center of attraction ...
... now this new work has begun ... which is so important that the Church will eventually change its Holy Day from the Sabbath (the last day of the week when God "rested") to Sunday (the first day of the week when Jesus took on the fight over death and evil which still continues ... except that now he is the trainer ... and you and I are the fighters in the ring who are already the winners because of Him.

And that is where the story continues this morning.

The Sabbath is over ... it has been trumped! The Sabbath was a reminder of the understanding of creation expressed in the Genesis ... "the book of the Beginnings." People were reminded that on the Sabbath Day, God rested. The ten commandments called upon the faithful people to rest on the seventh day, just as God had. Laws were written about how far one could walk on Sabbath ... and those laws became very specific and "picky-yunny" about what one could and/or couldn't do on Sabbath.

The Resurrection of Jesus basically shattered those laws and rewrote the story! Though the women, according to Mark's Gospel, "got out as fast as they could, beside themselves, their heads swimming. Stunned, they said nothing to anyone" ... eventually they along with all of those early disciples were able to think through what they had experienced ... and that early Christian Community reinterpreted the Ten Commandments so that their day of worship became the first day of the week ... not the "day when God rested" but rather the "day when God started a new thing."

Every Sunday is, for us Christians, a celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus who is the Christ. That is why, even during the Lenten season now completed, Sundays don't count. That is why, if you gave up chocolate for Lent, you could (or you could have) still have eaten it on Sundays ... because Sundays are always proclamations of and celebrations of the Resurrection.

If you are following doing the Daily Discipleship Bible Studies found on our website, you might remember that the material for today included these thoughts:

Easter Sunday is a day of great expectations. Some might say these are foolish, wishful expectations. After all, we know what to expect in life. Only two things are for certain, the saying goes, and one of them is death. We are reminded of that every day in the local newspaper. We read of tragic deaths, deaths of heroes and celebrities. And on a more personal, profound level, we not only read but we experience the deaths of loved ones, family, and friends. We know only too well the power of death. We expect it and know it to be true for every one of us.

And so we come to this day with our very real experiences of death, pain and loss. Like the women at the tomb that first Easter morning, we have stood at the opening of the grave of a loved one. It is a common experience, a common, shared expectation that this life will one day end.

But in the common, early dawn that first Easter morning, the women's expectations were shattered by a life-changing, life-giving, life-transforming proclamation: "He is not here but has risen!" God has brought hope from despair, joy from sorrow, and life from death. God has obliterated our expectations and has destroyed the power of death in Jesus' resurrection.

It makes all the difference in the world, because it is God's love for the world that gives Jesus for the sake of the world. Through the resurrection of Christ, our expectations are transformed. We look for and expect to see light, even in the darkest times of our life. We look for and expect to see possibility, even when the outcome seems inevitable. We look for and expect to see life, even in the face of death – our own, and our loved ones' as well.

I hope that his difference is where you place your trust this morning; and if so, it is called faith.

If today's technology had been in place on that day, we wouldn't need faith. If seeing equates believing, then it could possibly be so much easier to believe the story if we had it on a DVD and could see it on the History Channel.

But we have the witness of those few who were there first hand ... and they told someone ... they told someone ... and they told someone ... and someone told my grandparents ... and they told my parents ... and my parents told me ... and we've told our children ... and they are telling their children ... and the story goes on.

Like the young man in Mark's Gospel said, "Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus the Nazarene, the One they nailed on the cross. He's been raised up; he's here no longer. You can see for yourselves that the place is empty. Now—on your way. Tell his disciples and Peter that he is going on ahead of you to Galilee ..."

Today's Gospel reading is from Luke 24:1-2 ... I have read from Mark 16:1-8.

Most of Mark's account is included in Luke with a couple significant changes:

In Mark, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bring spices ... in Luke, it is just "they."

In Mark, the women are talking about how they're going to roll away the stone ... that conversation isn't in Luke.

In Mark, a young man is sitting on the right side ... in Luke two men are standing beside them.

In Mark, the women see the place where the body had been and they are told to go tell Peter ...
In Luke “they” are reminded that Jesus had said this would happen.

In Mark, the women flee in amazement and “say nothing to anyone for they were afraid”
In Luke, “they” remember what Jesus had said and they “tell the eleven disciples and all the rest.”

And then Luke concludes with the words found only in his Gospel:

¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹²Peter, 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.

The Church is THE GATHERING OF THE AMAZED who believe what Mary and Joanna and Mary said ... that seemed like nonsense to the guys ... but next week we’ll be reminded of what Thomas said ... and throughout the Easter season we will continue to hear the reports of those who saw the Risen Christ and were present at his Ascension.

The Apostle Paul said it best in his words, in what we know as 1 Corinthians 15 where he talks about the Resurrection of Christ:

¹... I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

¹²But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile;

you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

²⁰But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For he "has put everything under his feet."^[c] Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. ²⁸When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

***Trademark**

Buffer began using the phrase "Let's get ready to rumble!" in the early 1980s. By 1992, he acquired a federal trademark for the phrase. Buffer uses his famous phrase in various licensing deals including the platinum selling album *Jock Jams* by Tommy Boy Records, the video games *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*, *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing: Round 2* for the PlayStation 2, Nintendo 64, Dreamcast and Game Boy Advance and *Greatest Heavyweights of the Ring* for the Sega Genesis and numerous other products.^[8] In addition, he has used variations of the phrase in advertisements, including the popular commercial for Mega Millions in which he says "Let's get ready to *Win Big!*" and the Kraft Cheese commercial in which he says "Let's get ready to *Crumble!*".
As of 2009, Buffer had earned over \$400 million from licensing on the trademark.^[9]

Daily Discipleship

Luke 24:1-12

Prayers of Discipleship: *To Proclaim the Good News*

Focus Question: *How do we tell and live the Good News of the resurrection?*

word of life

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen’ Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.” (Luke 24:6, 8 NRSV)

Read Luke 24:1-12

On this festival Easter Sunday, the gospel reading may be either from the Gospel of John or from Luke. This *Daily Discipleship* will focus on Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus.

The previous chapter in Luke’s Gospel ends as we expect any life to end – with death. Jesus has been crucified; his lifeless body has been laid in a rock-hewn tomb. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee (Luke 23:55) witness where and how the body is laid in the tomb. It is Friday near sunset, the beginning of the Sabbath – a day in which no work is allowed (certainly not the handling of a corpse). So the women return home to prepare ointments for burial and to observe the commandment of keeping the sabbath. They will have to wait until Sunday to offer their last gesture of love for Jesus by anointing his body in the tomb.

What are some gestures of love you have seen expressed at the time of loss?

What impact do these actions have on those who are grieving ... and on those who offer the gestures?

Our Easter Sunday reading begins with sunrise that Sunday morning. And it begins with a simple three-letter word: “But” “But on the first day of the week, at early dawn ...” (Luke 24:1). As predictable as the previous chapter had been – the finality and certainty of death – this new dawn is filled with perplexing, unexpected surprises.

Take a few minutes to look at the first twelve verses of Luke 24, and note the number of times the word “but” is used. (The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is helpful for this exercise.)

What is so significant about this little word?

Luke’s account of the resurrection does not mention the anxiety of the women wondering how they will move the stone sealing the opening of the tomb. The women are “perplexed” that the corpse is gone (Luke 24:4). Then two men appear in shining clothes (in Matthew it is an angel; in Mark it is a young man) and ask a question unique to Luke’s gospel: “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5) We will see two men in white robes appearing at the ascension of Jesus in Acts asking a similar question, “Why do you stand there looking up toward heaven?” (Acts 1:11) In both settings, the men answer their own question, pointing to a living Lord, triumphant over death and the grave: “He is not here, but is risen.” (Luke 24:5). God shatters, overwhelms, and exceeds the women’s expectations and brings forth life from death.

Share the memory of a time in your life when God surprised you, shattered, or exceeded your expectations.

In what ways does the Easter message shatter expectations?

The women leave the tomb to go and tell the disciples and all the rest the good news. Christ is risen from the dead!

word among us

On holidays like Easter Sunday, we have certain traditions and rituals we come to expect. We expect the sanctuary to be a bit more crowded than usual. We expect jubilant hymns (maybe even a trumpet or two). We expect to see lots of flowers and folks dressed up more than usual.

*What are the traditions and expectations you have in your congregation on Easter Sunday?
How about in your family or your community?*

Easter Sunday is a day of great expectations. Some might say these are foolish, wishful expectations. After all, we know what to expect in life. Only two things are for certain, the saying goes, and one of them is death. We are reminded of that every day in the local newspaper. We read of tragic deaths, deaths of heroes and celebrities. And on a more personal, profound level, we not only read but we experience the deaths of loved ones, family, and friends. We know only too well the power of death. We expect it and know it to be true for every one of us.

And so we come to this day with our very real experiences of death, pain and loss. Like the women at the tomb that first Easter morning, we have stood at the opening of the grave of a loved one. It is a common experience, a common, shared expectation that this life will one day end.

*What might it felt like for the women to go to the tomb early in the morning?
What are the feelings related to death?*

But in the common, early dawn that first Easter morning, the women's expectations were shattered by a life-changing, life-giving, life-transforming proclamation: "He is not here but has risen!" God has brought hope from despair, joy from sorrow, and life from death. God has obliterated our expectations and has destroyed the power of death in Jesus' resurrection.

What does it feel like to hear "Jesus has risen!"?

It makes all the difference in the world, because it is God's love for the world that gives Jesus for the sake of the world. Through the resurrection of Christ, our expectations are transformed. We look for and expect to see light, even in the darkest times of our life. We look for and expect to see possibility, even when the outcome seems inevitable. We look for and expect to see life, even in the face of death – our own, and our loved ones' as well.

How does the Easter message change your expectations and your view of the world?

It's a day of great expectations! Christ is risen! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

We gather to celebrate with great expectation. And we go forth to tell the world the Good News!



Dig Deeper / John 20:1-18 /last word

Look expectantly this week for examples of hope and life, even in the midst of loss.

Daily Discipleship

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