

Easter Sunday – April 5, 2015
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

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WHY DO YOU LOOK FOR THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?

Luke 24:1-11 (NIV)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2) They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3) but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4) While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5) In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6) He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7) 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8) Then they remembered his words. 9) When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10) It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11) But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Joyous Easter Christians;

Theme: He is Not Here; He Has Risen!

1. Let's Come and see. Then let's 2. Go and tell.

We traveled (in spirit) with the women to the tomb of Jesus as we got up (perhaps while it was still dark) and watched and listened to Luke's account of the Resurrection of our Savior. What did we see on that journey?

1. We saw the women – devoted followers of Jesus – gathering up spices that they had lovingly prepared prior to the Sabbath day and carrying their bundle with heavy hearts to the garden tomb of Jesus where it was their intention to show their final respect to the beloved teacher by completing the normal steps of preparing a corpse for burial. The conversation must have been sad at best – maybe even consisting only of talk about how they would carry out their task. They asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb?” Had they been aware of the fact that the chief priests and Pharisees had convinced Pilate to secure the tomb with his seal and to post a guard of soldiers there, perhaps they would have tried to plan a way to convince the guards to assist them.
2. As we arrived at the tomb with the women what did we see? We saw that the stone had been rolled away. The seal was broken the guards were AWOL – they no doubt had run off after they recovered from seeing the angel of the Lord that came down from heaven and went to the tomb and rolled back the stone and sat on it. Entering the grave we saw nothing – it was empty. Jesus' body was not there. It was gone. In our shock did we even notice the strips of linen lying there? Did we see the folded burial cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus head lying separate from the linens? (cf. John 20:6-7) Or did

the two men (angels) who suddenly appeared in clothes that gleamed like lighting and stood beside us prevent us from having time to notice?

3. The dazzling appearance of these men revealed that these were not ordinary human beings. They were divine messengers – angels sent from heaven who had come with a message of comfort and reassurance. “Why, they asked, do you look for the living among the dead?” And before that question could even sink in they continued. “He is not here. He is risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again?’”
4. Did you see for yourselves the fulfillment of Scripture which spoke of God’s Son not being abandoned to the grave? (cf. Psalm 16:10) “You will not abandon me to the realm of the dead nor let your holy one see decay.” Did you recall words Isaiah spoke concerning the Lord’s servant who was pierced for our transgressions, and was crushed for our iniquities – that after he has suffered, he will see the light of life? (cf. Isaiah 53: 5, 11) Did you see the fulfillment of Jesus’ own words that he must be killed and after three days rise again? (cf. Mark 8:31) Jesus spoke this way on numerous occasions.
5. Perhaps you didn’t see it then. But do you see it now? Do you see that the seed of the woman promised to Adam and Eve after the fall into sin has crushed Satan’s head by rising victoriously from the grave? Do you see that because of his resurrection you have been healed by his wounds? Do you see the hope, the comfort, the joy that is yours because he lives? Do you see that you have been set free from sin? Do you see that Jesus’ promise, “Because I live, you also will live” has been fulfilled? Do you see that now your life can be one of service to the Lord since you have been set free from your slavery to sin? Do you see that just as Jesus awoke from the sleep of death that those who die in the Lord will also wake to eternal life? Do you see the reason for our shouts of Alleluia (Praise the Lord)? And do you see the mission which lies before you?

He is Not Here; He Has Risen! We traveled with the women in spirit to come and see. Their journey didn’t end at the empty tomb. And that’s not where our Easter Journey should end either. Don’t just stand there and watch as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them leave the angel messengers and the empty tomb. Run along with them as they hasten to tell Peter and John and the other disciples. Go and tell what you have seen. But what will you tell?

Don’t let your words sound like nonsense. Don’t misrepresent what took place that Sunday morning as it appears Mary Magdalene did when she told Peter and John, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” (John 20:2) Don’t leave people confused and troubled by your words like the disciples from Emmaus who explained their Easter experience this way: “... some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning (23) but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. (24) Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.” (Luke 24:22-24 NIV)

Of course, the women should not shoulder all of the blame for the confusion and unbelief that clouded the apostles' hearts and minds that first Easter day. Their own foolishness and slowness of heart to believe ALL the prophets had spoken would require Jesus to open their hearts and minds to see for themselves the truth that he was their LIVING Savior. (cf. Luke 24:25-27)

The same will be true when we Go and Tell. God himself will have to open the hearts and minds of the people we tell so that they will believe. However we will want to give a clear testimony. We will want to clearly explain that Jesus lives.

Don't get so caught up with the angels and the empty tomb and the fact Jesus was not there so that you forget to tell what else you saw. Sadly it seems as if the Emmaus disciples were not the only ones who were confused as evening of that first Easter Sunday approached. Luke concluded his account of the events of that morning by saying that the apostles did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like non-sense. (Luke 24:11) It took time before the full impact of the message of the angels would sink in – He is not here. That's what stuck with the women, that's what stuck with the apostles. But there's more to tell isn't there? Indeed there is. He is risen! Say it with me, "He is risen." Let's say it again, "He is risen."

Alleluia, Jesus lives. He is now the living one. So when you go and tell, what will you say? The words of the beloved Easter hymn provide some wonderful suggestions. Tell of the comfort that the living Jesus provides. Tell of the blessings of his love. Tell how he pleads for us above. Tell how he feeds hungry souls and lives to help in time of need. Tell how he lives to comfort the weak and faint. Tell that he lives and hears the groaning of our souls, that he lives to silence fears, wipe away tears and calm troubled hearts. Tell about the mansions he has gone to prepare and that he promises to bring us safely there.

Tell it over and over again. He is risen!

And when you have told this, don't forget to invite others to come and see with you from the Scriptures everything that Jesus has to say about himself and his blessings because faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10:17)

He is risen. Alleluia! Jesus lives! He is now the living one.

He lives, all glory to his name!
He lives, my Jesus, still the same.
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:
"I know that my Redeemer lives!" Amen.