

Readings - Easter Sunday

**Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

**Luke 24:1-12**

**Acts 10:34-43**

## **We are Easter People**

As you have journeyed through lent and Holy Week have you noticed how closely this story or at least the symbolism of it relates to our own lives? It strikes me anew every year.

From the questioning of someone who is trying to do what is right and true.  
To the corruption that takes place in governmental and religious systems.  
To the dying of the good and the oppressing of those we perceive as lesser than.

This story intersects our own in so many places. This Holy Weekend story begins with a reminder of a very dark day in human history. One that is worth remembering so that we don't find ourselves repeating its horror.

However the part of the story that I hear so many relate to most is the grief and the mourning. We know what it is like to lose, to grieve, and to despair. We sorrow in the fact that we do evil to those that love. And so often we set ourselves down in the graveyard, we grieve at the tomb and we get ready to set up our tents in that place of mourning. Our life and our world have shown us how to live in the place of lament. Many of us have mastered discontent. We are so comfortable with Holy Saturday (the day of empty despair) that we go on about our day as if Sunday's never coming. We carry the grief of Friday and we lay it in the tomb and that's where we remain. We know how to stay in the dark places or at least in fearful ones.

That's why on this holy morning the disciples journeyed towards the tomb in their grief preparing to lay the life-giving Jesus to rest. They were prepared to go and make their memorial with the dead. They didn't expect to make a memorial of the living. They didn't expect that the words of hope and light their teacher had taught them were true. They figured he was just talking....telling stories....maybe they thought he was just one of those optimists...and now his time was up. They had forgotten the promises of hope and life. They had failed to remember he had said he would rise again.

Like so many of us, they found it easier to focus on the darkness, and the horror of evil bitter humanity. Like so many of us they had been through hell on earth and it was in that hell they remained. Like so many of us they were prepared to keep Jesus in the tomb. Like so many of us they forgot the promises of the prophet who said I will live, I will create a new way of being. I will carry you through the darkness to the light.

The disciples seemed to think his death had turned Jesus into an ordinary man. They were frustrated and sad and they had quickly forgotten how he called them to life. They forgot that he had showed them how to pray, and believe. They forgot that he had washed their feet and served them the bread and the wine and asked them to go and do likewise.

Just like we often do these followers of Christ chose to hold onto the sadness. We know how to burry our pain and grief within us. We know how to hold onto it as if it is who we are and we let that which is dead define us. We choose to live in the tombs because like the disciples we don't know how to cope with the resurrection.

Not all of us but many of us wear our histories of hurt and loss and damage. We wrap them up in our cocoons and keep them safe within because we are comfortable with that. It's when the cocoon starts to break open and when the stone is rolled away that we don't know what to do. Many of us prefer to live in tragedy or hopelessness because we are scared of the life.

Nelson Mandela stated in his Inaugural Speech "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world... We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some; it is in everyone."

This Easter day is the day when the cocoon breaks open, our shells are cracked and the stone rolls away exposing new life and possibility. The resurrection calls us to face our deepest fear and live out who we are truly created to be. Life abundant.

Moving from the death of Good Friday to the life of Easter will be different for everyone. life is a journey. But our faith story is of a God who can take the darkest of events and make something new. The resurrection is about creating new life and ultimately a new world. The Resurrection changed the rules of the

universe, it defied evil, tragedy and even death. When we celebrate the resurrection we cannot remain the same. It takes our deaths, and tombs and shadows and breaks them open exposing us to light.

It is true that it takes courage to crawl out of your cocoon. It takes courage to expose yourself to the light when it's been so easy to live in the dark. But if we embrace the Resurrection we cannot live the same because it makes us confront and expose that which has died and calls it to a new life.

It can feel almost impossible at times to believe that we are children of God, called by God to live the resurrection story. But that is what our faith is all about that is the being born again John talks about, the new creation we sing of with the psalmists and the prophets. That's the Amazing story of our faith. And in living we find ourselves called by God.

The Resurrection does not end with Jesus appearing in the garden. Jesus carried on and spoke and taught and reminded people of why he was here in the first place. No longer did the followers of Jesus have him to do the task of risking in love. No longer did they have their prophet, teacher, friend and messiah to live the fully human life God calls us to. The resurrection was not just about new life in Christ it is about new life for all.

Why live, I mean really live? Because that is what fullness is about. Eternal life starts here. Eternal life is now. Now is the time to live. This is the day of Salvation! We are Easter people. This is our resurrection story.

May we so live.