

April 12, 2020 – Easter Sunday!

Opening Scripture: Isaiah 53: 5, 11-12

Sermon Notes

THE EMPTY TOMB: HE IS NOT HERE, HE IS RISEN!

Scripture: Luke 24:1-10

He is not here, He is risen!

Who? Jesus, the Christ.

Let us pray.

Dr. Luke writes the historic story of the resurrection of the Lord.

When we read the story there are three groups of characters mentioned by Luke.

a. the women b. the angels c. the disciples - Peter and John.

I will dwell more on women than the other two, but will mention them as we study together.

Women were mentioned – holy women, redeemed women, the ones who loved Jesus. They were present at the time of his trial, at the crucifixion and now at the tomb.

Who were they? Dr. Luke writes in 8:1-3, “and women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven evil spirits were cast out; Joanna, the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others; These women were helping to support them out of their own means.”

Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of the Apostle James is mentioned.

Why were they there?

1. To see the dead body - to embalm him with spices.
2. They were bold and courageous, while the disciples were hiding because of the fear of the Jews.

3. They also had imaginary fear about the stone which was heavy and blocking the tomb's entry. They were there when the stone was placed. Dr. Luke writes about it in Luke 23:55-56, "The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment." (Also in Matthew 27:57-61)

Despite all their fears and sorrow, they came to the tomb.

Who will roll away the stone for us?

4. They came and saw:
 - a. The stone which was rolled away.
 - b. The tomb was empty – they saw no body.
 - c. Two men in clothes that glistened like lightning.
 - d. They were frightened and bowed down.

The Ministry of the Angels

It was angels who announced the approaching birth of Christ. Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:30-33

It was angels here who announced the resurrection of Christ. Luke 24:6-7

It was again the angels who announced the ascension of Christ

Acts 1:8-11

It is very interesting to note that the Apostles Creed, had all the statement which the angels made regarding Christ:

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried,
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

The men, who were angels, questioned the women:

A. Why do you look for the living among the dead?

B. He is not here, He is risen!

C. 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.’

Why do you look for the living among the dead?

The question is also asked to us?

Do we look for life?

- a. In prestige of good education
- b. In a good spouse
- c. In great children
- d. In financial success
- e. In the things that money can buy
- f. In entertainment

All these things will pass away. Do not look for life among the dead.

What has happened today - The malls are closed and empty (You can't use your money). Remember the story of Rich fool, who had lots of produce, big barns, but could not enjoy it. He died. (Luke 12:13-21)

The theaters are empty. The stadiums are empty, the planes are empty, the airports are empty, the streets are empty. Remember Alexander the great who tried to conquer the whole world. It is said that when he died, he wanted the world to see his empty hands showing from his casket.

Cars, boats and RVs are parked (Even though the gas prices are lowest now!) You can't visit your loved ones.

Sorrow and gloom everywhere?

One of my pastor colleagues described the present scene.

You come to me on first day of the week called Sunday, and say to God “Hello God! Good morning, How are you doing? Good to see you, Thank you very much, we appreciate all what you are doing, here is a check that will take care of your household needs, See you soon. Bye. Before I go

let me tell you, that I may not see you here as company is coming to my home this weekend, so I will be busy.”

The other said, “Lord I may miss you seeing here as I have to go with my friends and family to see the Gold and Green outfits, and it is very expensive to miss that.”

The other said “Lord, see the vacation is a must so I will be missing seeing you here.”

The Lord laughed and said, “I still love you.

I made you in my own image for one reason, to be with you always and all the days. I was spending time with Mr. and Mrs. Adams too every day, then they hid themselves and put on coverings. I want to be with you.

So, I am taking extreme decision to come to you daily, inside your closed doors. I did it for the frightened disciples in Jerusalem on first Easter. I offered them PEACE. You will need me more. I understand that you cannot come to me, but I will come to you, visit with you and celebrate life with you.”

Let us hear what the angels are stating to the women, and through them, to us. The angels are redirecting us to His word.

Their minds were on death, but the death of Jesus means death of death itself. YOU would not find Jesus among the dead. He is not here, He is risen.

1. Regarding the Cross - Look beyond the cross and the grave. He is not here and is risen as he had already declared.

The cross is the symbol of love and victory over sins of the world.

Our faith got stuck on tragedy without triumph, but the resurrection adds triumphs to the tragedy.

The women were directed to look among the resurrected beings.

Hebrews 11:17-19

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promise was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God has said to him, ‘It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.’ Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead and, figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.’

John 10:17-18

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.'

1 John 3:16

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

2. The angels encouraged the women to move from their feelings to Scriptures.

They were mourning, grieving, wondering and full of fear, but the Lord removed that fear.

Remember how he told you

The Son of God **must** be delivered into the hands of sinful men, to be crucified and on the third day he raised again.

How Jesus comforted the disciples, John 14:1-4

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

3. The angels also redirect them to move forward. Don't dwell on the past or recent events.

The women were shaken with the recent happenings in Jerusalem.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were saddened by the recent events.

Luke 24:25-27

What are the current events today - the figures of death are given by all the news media, the number of infections. Yes, it is sad. The virus of sin is taken care of by the antidote of the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from all our sin, provided we confess and believe on the work done on the cross and the empty tomb.

Today we are seeing the action of Corona's hand but we miss seeing what the hands of God are doing – for eternal life. Though we die, in Christ we shall live forever. (John 11:25)

Paul said “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21

Remember the word mentioned by the angels, who are reminding what Jesus said.

The word MUST - Jesus has to be delivered and go to the cross. But that is not the end, life is beyond the tomb.

O DEATH WHERE IS YOUR STING?

O GRAVE WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? (1 Corinthians 15:55)

Peter believed and saw Christ, the resurrected Christ and preached his first sermon boldly. The same Peter who in fear denied Christ 3 times during his trials. (Luke 22:31-34, 54-60)

Acts 2:22-24

Men of Israel, listen to this, Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

See the invisible hand of God who takes care of his people. It is God's work of redeeming men through the miracle of resurrection.

4. Angels reminded us that the Lord will turn our grief into laughter and joy.
1 Peter 1:3-6, 8-9

Praise be to the God and FATHER OF OUR LORD Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for you, who through faith

are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a while you may have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials . . .

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Alfred H. Ackley wrote a beautiful song in 1933

I serve a risen Savior, he's in the world today,
I know that he is living, whatever foes may say.
I see his hand of mercy, I hear his voice of cheer,
and just the time I need him, he's always near.
He lives, He lives. Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives. He lives within my heart!

“He Lives,” #310 in the United Methodist Hymnal

Some ideas in this sermon were inspired by the writings of Dr Philip W. McLarty and Pastor Thabiti Anyabwile.