

EASTER

A TIME TO WEEP, AND A TIME TO LAUGH

Ecclesiastes 3:4a; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-18

Background Information:

The resurrection is the one phenomenon of the Christian faith that the church remembered and celebrated since Christ first rose from the dead. Unlike Christmas that was celebrated in the fourth century and beyond and given a specific date. Easter is calculated by an ancient system adopted by the Council of Nicea in 325 c.e. using the lunar calendar, we celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. There is one day each spring and one day each fall when this equinox occurs. So, Easter can range anywhere from March 22 until April 25. Like Christmas the paraments are White.

A Time to Weep, And A Time to Laugh

We have spent the last three days weeping. It has been appropriate to cry. Jesus wept at a city that he loved and wanted his message to change. He wept at the death of his friend. He watched as the woman washed his feet with her tears. I can't help but believe that he wept hanging on the cross looking down into the faces of his mother and trusted friends who had walked the journey with him. There is a time for weeping.

And through all the moments Jesus had with his friends, I know he laughed and sang and rejoiced. I think of Mary, hearing Him call her name, and imagine that her joy was uncontainable. I think her shouting and running to tell the world of what she saw was the only thing she could do but laugh hysterically. A perfect time for laughing.

Is it not a perfect time for us to run out of our tomb and shout with unbounded joy that we too have risen to do life differently. To listen to God by opening ourselves to the world as a whole and to our world and the people around us. To be more trusting and grateful. To acknowledge the tears we cry and to know those same tears stream from our eyes as we laugh. To look out our windows and literally watch life pushing its way up through the tomb of winter budding and bring us life in color and fragrance.

My friends, I know this year is not our typical Easter. So much has happened during our last time together. So much has happened since Lent started and our biggest decision was do we give up chocolate or make sure to exercise for 40 days. We have been asked to isolate ourselves from everyone we love and everything that brings us joy and comfort we knew at Christmas. There won't be any trumpets heralding in the sanctuary filled with flowers. You won't get to see the choir loft bulging with people. People won't be wearing new hats and dresses and the children filling the chancel in their new Easter attire. I won't get to walk down the aisle with Francois and say hi to all the people I haven't seen since Christmas Eve. It will be different this year like non other in my lifetime. But, I'm not feeling too panicked; Jesus's resurrection didn't happen as a grand celebration in the midst of big crowds.

He emerged from the tomb mostly alone. Appeared to just a couple of women in a near-empty garden. And the witness of these women went on to spread beyond themselves, to the disciples, to all the ends of the earth.

Jesus will rise, even if we don't have front-row seats for the event. Jesus will rise, and I will proclaim it alongside my husband and in the hearts of all of you, and I will channel the women in the gospel, and have every confidence that even one voice shouting "Alleluia" is enough for this news of hope to spread throughout our congregation, the community, and the world.

Jesus doesn't need us to help him rise. He just needs us to proclaim the good news.

He is Risen. He has Risen Indeed!

CLOSING PRAYER

God of the empty tomb,

Lift our spirits on wings of wonder.

Turn our perplexities of these times into promise.

Fill the empty tomb of our spirit,

Until we overflow,

And race on resurrection feet t shout the good news

Christ is risen! Hallelujah.

Amen

