

April 4, 2010

Scripture: John 20: 1-18

Sermon: "He is Risen!"

Christ the Lord is risen today! Thanks be to God! That's the good news for us this morning and every morning. Christ the Lord is risen today! we hear these words and we know that death did not win. We hear these words and We know that the time in the grave did not last. Christ the Lord is risen today! we say these words, we shout these words, we whole-heartedly lift our voices in song and in praise, and we proclaim that Resurrection happens, continues to happen, and will continue to happen as a reality of our everyday life. Christ the Lord is Risen today! Rejoice! This is the day that the Lord has made! O Death, where now is your sting? O Grave, where no is your victory? Christ the Lord is risen today! Thanks be to God!

we hear these words and we find strength, we find comfort, we find hope. We know that the resurrection happened that morning all those years ago. And we know that the promise of the resurrection continues today. Christ the Lord is risen today! we hear these words, and we find joy in knowing that the experience of the resurrection happens each and every moment of our lives because in that moment of resurrection, we open ourselves up and encounter the healing presence of God in our lives! Christ the Lord is risen today! Thanks be to God!

Thanks be to God. Resurrection happens each and ever day. The experience of the Resurrection finds us each and every day. It finds us in the dark, hiding, hurting, grieving. It finds us in shadows, wounded and broken. It finds us in the gloom, lost and lonely. It finds us in darkness, hopeless and confused. Resurrection happens and Resurrection finds us!

what better news do we need right now. What better news does our world, our community, our nation need to hear right now! Resurrection happens. That is the good news that we need to remember right now! Darkness did not win. Suffering did not win. Pain did not win. Darkness and death do not have the last word. Our wounds, that divide and separate us, that fracture the body of Christ, our wounds from racism, poverty, pollution, war, broken relationships, grief, anger, sorrow do not have the last word. God's grace, God's love, God's hope, God's life-giving presence has the last word. Christ the Lord is risen today. Thanks be to God!

Resurrection happens! in the light that is shining brightly on Easter morning, we see clearly and we realize that our God did not and does not intend for us to live a life of pain, to live a life of sorrow, to live a life of hurt, to live a life in the shadows. The resurrection Light shows us that our God is loving, our God is steadfast, our God is gracious, our God is generous. Our God intends for all of God's children, intends for you and me, to live a life of light, to live a life of abundance, to live a life of grace, to life a life where we are made whole. Our God intends for us to live a life of peace, to live a life of hope, to live a life where we know that we are treasured, named and claimed.

Resurrection happens each and every moment of our days, each and every moment of our lives, each and every moment of our existence. Resurrection happens!

one of the most surprising things about the resurrection is that we never expect resurrection to happen. We are surprised when resurrection happens. We are surprised that hope does have the last word. We are surprised that new life can be found. We are surprised that we find healing for our wounds through the experience of the resurrection. We are surprised we find grace.

Resurrection surprises us every time because we never really expect it to happen for us and to us. We claim to be people of the resurrection, yet we struggle to believe or even think that resurrection does or will happen for us. We struggle with the resurrection because it seems like...well an easy answer. It seems like this idea, this belief, this hope in the resurrection is like a thin rope holding us, keeping us safe over a deep canyon. On the outside, Resurrection seems like this ideal situation that will solve all of our problems. We tell others that resurrection will wipe the slate clean. We tell ourselves that the resurrection experience gives us the opportunity to go back to the beginning.

Yet our Scriptures this morning, we learn that that is not the promise of the resurrection on this Easter morning. That that is not the good news of the resurrection on this Easter morning. That that is not why resurrection gives us new life on this Easter morning.

As believers, on this Easter morning, We have this image, this belief, this understanding that now that the resurrection has happened or continues to happen, that everything will be better, restored to the way things used to be before the pain, before the hurt, before the wounds. The Good news on that Easter morning and this Easter morning, and all other Easter mornings is that Resurrection doesn't work that way. When we really experience and open ourselves up to the power, the beauty, that grace of the resurrection, we understand that the promise is that we will be made whole. All the resurrection experiences promises is that everything will be okay, we just don't know what that okay is going to look like. All resurrection experience promises is that God has and will have the last word.

Resurrection never promises to restore things to the way things used to be before we were broken, to the way things used to be before we were wounded, to the way things used to be before we were damaged. In fact, none of the Gospels give that picture of the resurrection at all on that first Easter morning. None of the Gospels tell of the story of the resurrection as Jesus coming out of the tomb just like before, before he went to the cross, before the crown of thorns, before the pain and suffering, before he was wounded, before he was broken.

The Gospels never say Jesus came out, all shiny and new with no wounds. In fact, each of the Gospels lift up and remind the early followers and us today as modern day people of the resurrection that when the first followers came to the tomb that Easter morning, they were seeking Jesus who had been crucified. That they were seeking Jesus who had died on the cross. That they were seeking Jesus who bore the mark of the nails. That they were seeking Jesus who bore the marks from the crown of thorns. That they were seeking Jesus who suffered, died, and was placed in the tomb. They were seeking Jesus who had been wounded.

The Gospels never say that Jesus comes out of the tomb, free from the wounds of the cross, free from the wounds by the cross, The Gospels never say that that Jesus was like he was before the cross, no marks, no scars, no wounds. The Gospel writers realize that is not possible because resurrection doesn't happen that way. through the experience of the resurrection, Jesus was changed, through the experience of the resurrection, the first followers were changed, through

the experienced of the resurrection, the understandings and beliefs are changed. And the good news is that through the experience of the resurrection, Jesus' wounds were changed. Instead of causing death and suffering, the wounds had become moments of grace, the wounds from the cross had become life-giving, life-transforming, that the wounds from the cross had become signs of new life, signs of hope, signs of faith for all the world to see.

the simple fact of the matter is that if Jesus had come out of the tomb like he was before the cross, and if the Gospels writers had written the story that way, it would be like denying that suffering even happens or denying that suffering changes us or even saying that in our suffering, God does not care. If the story of the resurrection was told that way, then we would be saying that God does not recognize our hurts, that God does not suffer with us, that God does not love us enough to bear the weight or burden of pain. If we told the resurrection story like that without the grief, then it would be as if the pain and anguish of cross never existed. If we told the story of the resurrection that way, without the wounds visible, it would be as if we had nothing to hope for in this life, that we will never know peace, that we would never be healed, never be made whole, that God's grace is not enough.

thanks be to God, the resurrection story wasn't told that way on that Easter morning and it is not told that way in the year 2010. In the light of Easter morning, We see that Jesus' wounds are still there, visible. In the light of Easter morning, We see that Jesus' wounds are still, there, noticeable. In the light of Easter morning, We see that Jesus' wounds are still there, evident for all the world to see. Just as much as our own wounds. Just as much as our own scars. Just as much as our own hurts.

The Resurrection does not erase the wounds. The resurrection does not undo the wounds. The resurrection does not deny the wounds.

What resurrection does is joyously proclaim is that the wounds of the cross, by the cross, the wounds of hurt, sorrow, grief, pain, are now transformed, are now healed by the gift of new life, the gift of hope, the gift of grace. The wounds are still there, but they are no longer causing pain. The wounds are still there, but they are no longer causing hurt. The wounds are still there, but they are no longer causing death. The wounds are still there but they don't have power over us or control us any more!

The resurrection tells us that God has the last word! The resurrection invites us to experience God's healing touch which "gives us confidence, which lets us know that we are transformed, which lets us know we are named and claimed as God's Beloved!"

Resurrection doesn't erase the wounds. Resurrection shows us that in the light of Christ, in the new life that can only be found through Jesus Christ, that in the light of God that never goes away, our wounds caused by this world, our wounds of this world, our wounds of suffering and pain will begin to heal, to become moments of extraordinary grace, to become moments where we encounter the Divine and find peace.

And that is the Good News of the resurrection! It doesn't deny the wounds. It doesn't erase our wounds. It doesn't remove our wounds. Our wounds are a part of who we are as people. Our wounds make us who we are today. Our wounds tell our story.

And the good news is that Easter morning, that the resurrection reveals our wounds in light of God's all embracing, all healing, all-giving presence and we find hope, we find, peace, we find courage in this healing because we know that we are named and claimed as God's very own. The Good news on that first Easter morning and on this Easter morning and all other mornings that will follow is that in the light of God, in the light of new life, in the light of the resurrection, our are not as deep as we first thought, are not as terminal as we first thought, are not as incurable as we first thought. In that first light on Easter morning, and in that first light of every day of our lives, we begin to understand that our wounds are signs of hope, that Our wounds are signs of faith, that our are signs of new life, that our wounds are signs that God is still working in our world. God has the last word.

The Good News of the resurrection is that we are transformed, that we are changed, that we are not alone.

Christ the Lord is Risen today! Let us shout it for all to hear!

Christ the Lord is Risen today!

we are the people of the resurrection. May we always celebrate the gift of new life, the gift of healing, the gift of transformation on this Easter morning and all the other mornings of our lives. Amen.