

3 31 24 Easter Sunday *Life Revealed in Brokenness* Luke 24:13-35

Last Sunday during our Restorative process discussion, the theme of Power came up. Who has power in the church? Why do some have power and some not? Where does the power come from? If there are truly individuals who have “more” power here, I confess I’m at a loss to identify what the **benefit** of having more power is. You and I all have power **in** the church. We also have power **as** a church. Each one of us has the ability to influence others. The key is to show up and speak up. We have a congregational meeting on April 28 after worship. You are invited to show up - for worship, the meeting, and the potluck - and to speak up. We share opinions, thoughts and feelings and we vote. This decision-making process was decided by the congregation, and codified into our Bylaws...

Oh! Wait. What? You didn’t come to church on Easter morning to hear about Bylaws?? What? You want to know about this mystery called the **resurrection**? Pardon my enthusiasm about the annual meeting! I guess today’s priority **is** about Jesus rising from the dead, though we must be honest that we all come to this worship service (and to questions about resurrection) from a wide spectrum of beliefs.

At one end, Jesus was God in human form, he died and came back from the dead in a new form/ a resurrected being. At the other end of the spectrum, the resurrection was a myth created to help convince others to believe in Jesus of Nazareth and follow his teachings. Elsewhere along this spectrum there are shared beliefs that the resurrection was not an event that happened to Jesus, rather something that happened to his followers – the disciples who witnessed his suffering and today’s followers - who perceive *resurrection* to be something that can be experienced in the here and now.

In this sanctuary today, there are many resurrection realities like these, and more.

None of these perspectives is “better” than another. None will get one person into heaven and the other, not. All of these views hold good news.

The overarching message of any resurrection reality is that death is not the last word. The message is that there are powers or a power that is stronger than the inability of the human body to keep going. So it follows that the resurrection reality is only for people who are experiencing, or who love someone, who is struggling with Cancer, Alzheimer’s, or another terminal illness. It follows that resurrection is only for people who are living in war zones, or without resources. And Resurrection is only for the ones who have lost meaning in life, or who don’t have a sense of direction, or who feel lonely. This whole idea of a power greater than death only makes sense to people who are grieving, who experience marginalization, and those who seek a way through difficult times. Huh Clearly, the message of any resurrection reality is for all of us.

Because it’s true the message is for everyone, all **interpretations** of the resurrection are also true. The divine Jesus revived from the dead; the myth of the resurrection; and followers of Jesus experiencing the inspiration of new life in a moment. All of these resurrection realities are true.

On the road to Emmaus, the people who walked along with Jesus were so overwhelmed with the idea of death, that they couldn’t recognize him. And as it is for all of us who grieve, they were moved to tell him the story of the one they loved, the tragedy of his death, and the preposterous idea that he may still be alive. Even as Jesus spoke eloquently about scriptures, he was not recognized. It was only when they came together for a meal and Jesus blessed

and broke the bread, and shared it with them, that all the pieces seemed to fall into place:

Oh! Broken bread. Jesus' broken body. Our broken bodies. The brokenness of humanity. Broken bread ...shared. Shared brokenness! Oh!

It was the idea of **shared brokenness** that opened their eyes and excited them. They were energized – dare I say resurrected - by the idea that from this place of vulnerability, a renewed sense of commitment to Jesus' teachings came to life. As followers who experienced resurrection, they were empowered to **show** how one can love and pray for enemies, advocate for people who are pushed aside, befriend the lost and lonely, and they had newfound power to lead the people of God by being servants. In that moment, the divinity, mythology and human inspiration came together in one message of renewal.

The reality (or realities) of the resurrection empower us to persevere in the most human of situations, knowing that death will never have the last word. The only power that matters, the power of love, overcame and still overcomes the tomb. The resurrection reality that you hold in your head and heart today will sustain you with new life – and that is good news on this Easter Sunday morning.

Amen.

Luke 24:13-35

The Walk to Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Let us pray:

We thank you, Redeeming God, for the glorious message

That you bring new hope out of despair,

Resurrection out of defeat, and new life out of death.

You give living water so that new life blossoms.

You urge flowers to push their way through winter-hardened soil.

We bring before you the dead and dried-out places in our lives,

That through your touch we may discover newness of life.

We bring before you the places in our lives and in our world

where despair reigns unchallenged.

With grief we bring you concerns

for countless countries across the globe

where the cycle of violence goes on and on.

Point us toward actions, however small,

Which lead to a more hopeful future

For ourselves and for our world.

Gracious God, we thank you that you walk beside us

As we journey through life.

Because you are with us, we accept each new day,

With its joys and sorrows, as a gift.

Because you are with us,

we gain courage to meet the challenge of the day,

Choosing life and not death as we move through time.

As you raised Jesus from the dead,

Raise us to new life day by day.

For we pray in the name of the Risen One. Amen.