**April 17, 2022 *John 20:1-18***

***He is RISEN!!!***

**Scripture: *John 20:1-18 NRSV***

*(1)Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. (2)So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." (3)Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. (4)The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. (5)He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. (6)Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, (7)and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. (8)Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; (9)for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. (10)Then the disciples returned to their homes. (11)But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; (12)and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. (13)They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." (14)When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. (15)Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." (16)Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). (17)Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (18)Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.*

**Notes:**

1. The ***Garden***
   1. The sin that entered the world in the ***garden*** is conquered in this new ***garden***.
2. The ***Mission*** and ***Gospel*** of resurrection.
   1. Jesus tells Mary to ***go*** and ***tell*** the others.
   2. Jesus ***empowers*** Mary and she leaves changed.
   3. ***Resurrection*** is something to be shared, not hoarded.
   4. Join the Holy Spirit in the work of sowing seeds of ***resurrection***.
3. Jesus brings us New ***Life*** from ***Death***
   1. Living the resurrected life means doing ***hard*** things and going to ***unexpected*** places.
   2. We go trusting in the ***hope*** of resurrection.
   3. Resurrection people seek to bring ***hope***.
4. There is resurrection ***hope*** for everyone in all circumstances:
   1. Resurrection people are called to ***go***.
   2. ***Baptism*** is the initiating act into the community of resurrection.
5. Resurrection is not just something that happened one time, it is a ***way*** to ***live***.
   1. We are people of ***resurrection***.
   2. ***Declare*** with confidence that Christ is risen here this morning,
   3. ***Declare*** your Savior’s resurrection in and to the world.

**Script:**

What defines you? I am often defined by who I was, who I aspire to be, but mostly who I am. In my eyes I was a nerdy kid, no matter how hard I tried to fit in, I never felt accepted. In College, I was an outsider to all of the popular groups of people. As a teacher, for thirty years I taught my classes but I still felt like an outsider. As a Pastor, I struggle with the border between being your pastor and being a friend. But then there is my family, I am a son, a brother, a husband, a father, and grandfather; in all of these situations I feel most comfortable in my family, where I am truly defined.

The resurrection is the defining moment of the Christian faith. Our entire faith revolves around it, even our gathering together in worship on Sunday mornings is because of the resurrection. It’s supposed to serve as a reminder each and every week of the power of resurrection. It’s the reason that, even during Lent, we take a break from fasting on Sundays to feast and celebrate.

Resurrection day is so important, it is so important that we spend weeks preparing for it through the season of Lent. The liturgical colors change to white. We fill our sanctuaries with flowers. We often buy new clothes. We give small gifts. We celebrate with food and shouts of acclamation that, “He is risen! He is risen indeed!” It is a great day of celebration. Jesus is alive! Sin and death have been defeated.

But it would be a mistake to view this resurrection day as a one-time act that we observe and celebrate. Because the power of the resurrection wasn’t just that Jesus was raised from the dead, but also that the power of resurrection was unleashed upon the world. We can live in the power of the resurrection each and every day, we can share the power of the resurrection in a world plagued by sin and death, and we long for the someday resurrection of the dead. We rejoice that Jesus was raised, but we also rejoice that we too are continually being brought to life. This is why baptisms are often celebrated on Easter; because, when we are baptized, we are united to the death and resurrection of Jesus. As the people of God, we are a resurrection people. Stand and share in the reading of our Gospel passage today John 20:1-18

***(1)Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. (2)So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." (3)Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. (4)The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. (5)He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. (6)Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, (7)and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. (8)Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; (9)for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. (10)Then the disciples returned to their homes. (11)But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; (12)and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. (13)They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." (14)When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. (15)Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." (16)Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). (17)Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (18)Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:1-18 NRSV***

Let’s take a look at this scene from The Garden. Mary is so filled with grief that, when she encounters Jesus, she believes him to be a gardener. John is illustrating a theological truth here: the sin that entered the world in the garden is conquered through the resurrection of Christ in this new garden. Jesus is a gardener of sorts, Jesus causes new life to grow where there was once death.

While there is theological truth and deep meaning to the garden imagery here, Mary isn’t in the right place mentally to be making those deep theological connections. She just knows that her friend is gone, He died, and she misses him. And more than that, she’s grieving. Grieving her mistaken hopes about who the Messiah was and what he would do for her and her people.

When we experience such deep grief, the kind of grief that Mary is feeling in this moment, it can be difficult to focus on any bigger picture. There have been studies done on the effects of grief on the brain, and it turns out that our brains can shut themselves down, our brains resort to only the most basic functioning levels, making abstract and critical thinking difficult if not impossible. This science could account for Mary’s confusion and inability to recognize Jesus. Her friend and Messiah is dead. Her only comfort is in being able to honor his physical body, according to the customs of her culture and now she cannot even do that. Of course she doesn’t recognize Jesus! Mary isn’t looking for him as resurrected.

This brings us to the Mission and Gospel of resurrection. When Jesus speaks Mary’s name, there is a powerful moment of recognition. Jesus sees her, Jesus knows her, and calls Jesus out to her. She is not just another person grieving, she is his disciple, whom he loves. After she recognizes and names Jesus in return, she is told to go. She is now given the task of evangelism Jesus tells her to go and tell the others.

Jesus is once again doing something new. Important tasks like this were never given to women, because they were viewed as lacking credibility. But Jesus empowers Mary to share the gospel, and she leaves their encounter changed. She is now Mary who has seen the risen Christ, and Mary the evangelist.

This encounter with the resurrected Christ teaches Mary that resurrection is something to be shared, not hoarded. We are called to be a resurrection community, called out of sin and death, just like Mary and the disciples. We live in the hopeful expectation that, just as Christ was raised, we too will one day be raised. With that hope, we go into the dead places of the world and breathe resurrection into them, joining the Holy Spirit in the good work of sowing seeds of resurrection.

Jesus brings us New Life from Death. Living the resurrected life means walking the hard road to the cross, which means laying down our stuff; our greed, selfishness, pride, etc. It also might mean laying down our very lives for those around us. It means doing hard things and going to unexpected and hard places. We go into the worst places of the world, trusting in the hope of resurrection. Resurrection people do not fear the worst places but seek to bring hope, and the light and life of resurrection, into them. Resurrection people know that, in the power of the Spirit, we can do hard things.

There is resurrection hope for everyone in all circumstances: for places and people embroiled in racism, for places and people embroiled in sexism, or any other form of hate; for places and people consumed by poverty; for places and people battling disaster, violence, and disease. Resurrection people are called to go even when it is hard and difficult. We are not abandoned but are gifted by the Holy Spirit. We declare through our lives, through our words, and through our actions, even the most forgotten and forsaken places can be redeemed by God in resurrection hope. Consider the meaning of Baptism. Baptism is the initiating act into the community of resurrection. The water symbolizes both a cleansing *and* a being brought out of death and into new resurrection life. When we baptize others, we welcome them into this community, we invite them to join us as resurrection people. But we also remember our own identity as resurrection people.

We sometimes talk about the spirit of Christmas; how the spirit of Christmas is one that lives on throughout the year, but it would be more appropriate to talk about the spirit of Easter living on throughout the year. Resurrection is not just something that happened one time. It is not something that we just commemorate each year; rather, it is a way to live.

Are you people of the resurrection? Do you live in ways that breathe new life into the world around you? Do you look for the Holy Spirit at work, and to join that work? Do you share the stories of what you have seen God do? Do you look forward with hopeful expectation to the resurrection of the dead?

We are people of resurrection. We are called to live in ways that breathe new life into the world around us. We must be looking for where the Holy Spirit is at work, and asking God to show us how we can join that work. We must share stories of when and where God has breathed new life into us. Look ahead to the resurrection of the dead, not passively, but in hopeful expectation.

Stand up this morning and declare with confidence that Christ is risen here this morning, He is risen in this space, in this place, He calls us to go into the all of the world to work for or Savior, go into the world and tell the story of Jesus your Savior, and declare your Savior’s resurrection in and to the world around you.