

## **Easter Sunday, Year C,**

Sermon by Glenn A. Brumbaugh

21<sup>st</sup> April, 2019

**Acts 10:34-43 NRSV / Luke 24:1-12 NRSV**

Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed!

We've finally arrived at the end of our journey

through Lent, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday,

Good Friday and Tenebrae service to Easter Sunday. Whew!

As I prepared this week for today, and read over the scripture,

I have reflected on what more I can really say

that hasn't already been said.

Our scriptures this morning pretty much say it all.

Jesus died and was buried in a tomb,

and on the third day the tomb was found to be empty.

Jesus, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power,

traveled through Judea spreading the Good News

of a new way of living out the faith and following God,

while freeing those he encountered

from oppression and suffering.

Through his suffering, death, and resurrection,

there is the promise and hope of a life without the fear of death.

Often we can overthink and overcomplicate things, can't we?

When we gather to celebrate Easter Sunday

through music, food, and worship,

we really do have the whole Gospel,

the Good News encapsulated in a nutshell.

So what do we do with that Gospel, that Good News?

Well, if you are seeking a solution

to the trials and turmoils of an earthly life

that you are trying to live on your own,

the path Jesus laid out for us to follow

can provide the relief you seek.

A path based on service and compassion for others as yourself,

and love for your Creator who makes it all possible.

If you've already signed up for that Jesus journey,

your lived life should be spreading that Good News around,

individually and together with other believers.

That's what Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, and the other women

set out to do in our story today.

When they found the tomb empty,

and had their encounter with the angels,

they remembered what Jesus had told them

that he would rise again.

So they go running back to tell the others who are holed up hiding,

trying to avoid Jesus' fate.

Peter and the others scoff at this “tale” they think the women are telling,  
yet he goes to check it out himself,  
and is himself amazed at what he finds.

Maybe that’s the focus we should have this morning.

How do we understand the Gospel for ourselves?

Is it just a story that we scoff at as a tall tale

like Peter and the other disciples?

Is it the promise fulfilled that the Marys and Joanna

find at the empty tomb?

Something happened that first Easter.

Something that had such an impact that the word began to spread,  
and people began to seek to become a part of what began that day.

That singular event slowly transformed history.

In a world awash with pagan religions,  
gradually those religions faded,  
while Christianity grew and spread,  
far beyond its Jewish roots.

However you see the resurrection:

as light triumphing over darkness, good against evil,  
life overcoming death;  
out of those events sprung hope and promise,  
hope in a world transformed,  
the promise of life eternal.

When we look in the empty tomb, what is the Good News that we see?

Do we just see the potential of our own salvation,

our own golden ticket to heaven?

Or do we see all the potential we have

in being and sharing the Good News for others?

That's an important question to consider.

If we are just looking for our own golden ticket,

then we can focus on seeking forgiveness for our own sins,

through our own prayers,

and go about our daily lives relying on that magic grace

we assume is there for the taking.

Maybe we'll show up at church once in awhile

to make sure we're still in those good graces,

send a check to make sure we're covering our baptismal vows,

and then head out to catch the Mariners or Seahawks

the rest of the time.

However, if we look in the empty tomb and see the Gospel,

the Good News,

and remember our obligation to share that vital information,

then our journey looks quite different.

It's not just about ourselves. It involves everybody we meet.

It's the neighbors down the street,

it's the homeless guy outside the Target or QFC.

It's the guys at the group home down the street,

it's our friends, our family, our acquaintance, and our coworkers.

It involves picking up our crosses and following Jesus,

ministering like Jesus, sacrificing like Jesus.

It's less about the floor show on Sunday

and more about what happens outside the walls of this sanctuary.

In fact, when we look in the empty tomb,

we should see the world of need all around us.

These sacred times of our calendar

we just love to use imagery of lights in the darkness.

I'm certainly very guilty of that myself,

probably one of my favorite metaphors and literary devices.

Yet what kind of lights are we, or can we be?

Are we like Peter and the other apostles?

Do we find ourselves despondent,

without hope,

because all that we thought our journey was about

has gone away,

faded into the twilight of Good Friday?

We worry about attendance numbers and budgets,

buildings and maintenance,

but is that really what our mission is about?

Are we so stuck on what we thought was the plan,

like those early disciples, that when everything goes south,  
we just chuck it in and hibernate at home?

How are we being the gospel to those who are in need of Good News?

Do our prayers focus on ourselves and our own little club of believers

hidden behind our familiar comfortable walls

like the early apostles in our story,

or do they seek guidance on how we should act

as the hands and feet of Christ

in the community as we find it right here, right now,

to be the Good News we are called to be and share?

This Easter morning let us give thought to what we see in that empty tomb?

Is it just our own reflection, our own well-being or salvation,

our own sense of what we think God's work should be?

Or is it something more?

Do we see the hope and promise for the world around us,

or just for ourselves?

As we give thought to what's next in our lives in community,

as the body of Christ over the next week,

let us all take time to pray and think about

what the Good News means to each of us,

and ways in which we can share that news, and be that good news,

to the community around us.

I pray that we can find new purpose and meaning

that isn't limited to an hour here

in our version of a locked room on Sunday morning.

May it be so. Amen.