

Easter Day 2021

April 4, 2021

Year B RCL

Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; John 20:1-18

“I have seen the Lord”

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Easter Day from the narratives of the Bible when this event happened, until today the morning of Easter Sunday 2021, has the same meaning: Jesus is risen, death is not the last word in the human history, and the Passover is more than a memorial meal. We really celebrate Jesus' passing from death to life. His Passover/Easter opens for us the opportunity to have eternal life.

This celebration is a testimony that in the Risen Christ, we Christians, and all who have been baptized in the Trinitarian Name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have the capacity to overcome also the physical death and continue living forever in God's Kingdom. Easter as resurrection does not exclude us from experiencing death, but shows to us that the empty tomb of Jesus is the new reality for us to enjoy after all the pain and destruction that death brings.

Even with the new life of the Risen Lord, it is important to understand that death is a natural process that Jesus himself experienced on Good Friday. There is nothing magic, on the contrary, the stories from the Bible are dramatic in telling Jesus' painful betrayal, passion, crucifixion, and death among criminals. The people involved in the stories as family, friends, neighbors, and authorities all live the death of Jesus from a different perspective, and different levels of sorrow and grief. There are some for which his passing is just part of the news of the day, and there are others like Mary his mother, or John, or Peter that feel the excruciating pain of death is in their own intimate circle.

In some way the same continues happening today; for some it is just a death, and for others a loved one is gone forever. This is one of the reasons for which we need to be attentive to reading the signs from John's Gospel. "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark", the new life Easter happens in the new day, but when it is still dark. This combination of the rays of sunlight of the new day and still dark represents the struggle to confirm without seeing that the stone has been removed and the tomb is empty.

It is important to remember that Easter happens in a new day, the first day of the week, for us Christians on Sunday, today and each Sunday. Many around us are unable to see this new day, especially those whose lives have experienced

illness and loss due to the pandemic. From Easter 2020 to Easter 2021, the Covid pandemic in the US has continued to increase the number of victims, in one year we went from 100,000 people who had passed away by April 2020 to more than 550,000 in April 2021. And yet even with all this exorbitant amount of death and pain, today on Easter Sunday, God offers a new day, a new opportunity to live and experience the new life of the Risen Lord.

The fact that we are returning to our church building and many are getting vaccinated proves for us that God is always in control of human history. Pandemic and death are part of our lives, but they are not the ultimate destiny, God in Jesus' resurrection proves that the cross of obedience and humility conduces to the new life God offers to us as a gift. The passion and death of Jesus takes him from the tomb to tell Mary Magdalen "go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

In this Easter Day, we that hear from the gospel of John the testimony of what happened can run like Mary Magdalen or Peter or the beloved disciple trying to explain what and how the resurrection was possible. We can choose to continue weeping outside the tomb because we are unable to see the body and are disturbed by the emptiness of the tomb. These reactions, like our doubts or lack of understanding do not change the true reality that God is alive, Jesus is not

anymore inside that tomb. The words we hear from Jesus, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” in John 2:19, have much value now that we understand Jesus as the Risen Lord, the mediator and new temple.

On Easter morning, we recognize that the power of love and life is stronger than the dominion of death. Mary Magdalen in hearing Jesus calling her by name passes from confusion to recognition and acknowledgement of her teacher. She becomes the announcer of the new life Jesus brings, “I have seen the Lord.” The darkness of the dawn is not enough to stop the love and life the new day offers.

It is important to remember that this new life that God offers for us in Jesus is not exclusive of Easter Sunday. Each Sunday for us Christians is a memorial and a celebration of Jesus resurrection, the Risen Lord walks and lives with us and is among us. Around us, there are many that need to be comforted and reassured about the Easter announcement. With them, we need to praise God and share the words of Psalm 118, verse 17, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.” Each new day we have the opportunity to show to the world that the tomb is empty and the Risen Lord is with us. Amen.