

“Christ is Risen, Indeed”

Mark 16:1-8

April 4, 2021

Christ is risen.

A couple of weeks after the Resurrection, someone asked Joseph of Arimathea, “Why’d you let them bury Jesus in your brand new tomb?” Joseph shrugged his shoulders and answered, “He only needed it for the weekend!”

Christ is risen indeed.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important and historical and amazing event in our human history.

At the Sunday School class, teacher asked the class, what was the first words Jesus uttered right after he was risen from the dead? No one answered for a while until a young boy stood up at the rear of the class room and said, “I know, I know” raising his right hand high. “Okay Sam. What was it?” He said with a big smile on his face, “Da Da!!!” with opening his two arms wide. Da.. Da.. Surprise!

Easter is a surprise, a big, incredible surprise! Jesus died on the cross three days ago and was risen again. Back to life, again. “Really? How can it be true? Don’t pull my leg.”

According to the Gospel of Mark, three women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body. But to their surprise, they found the stone that blocked the tomb rolled away from the entrance of the tomb and when they entered the tomb, they encountered a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side. He told them that Jesus is risen and asked them to go and tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

How did the women respond to this shocking surprise? “Trembling and bewildered, they went out and fled from the tomb.” And they said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.” Fully understandable. Isn’t it? If I were there, I would join them to get out and flee from the tomb and say nothing to anyone, because I would be afraid.

According to the Gospel of Luke, when the women told the disciples that Jesus is risen, they considered it an idle tale. Eugene Peterson translates it this way, “the apostles didn’t believe a word of it, thought they were making it all up.” Kun Sam translates it this way, “the apostles did not believe at all what they said, for they thought the women pulled their leg.”

“No way! It is a non-sense.” But you know what? They were right. The news the women brought them does not make a sense. It sounds unreal. It is unreal!

Anyone ever heard of someone regaining life after being declared dead for three days? No way. We have heard that there are some people who have experienced near death experience. But eventually they all will die and so do we. No breathing means no life. No turning back.

Easter story does not make a sense. Does it? Easter story does not match with our common sense and goes against our rational thinking. Does it? But look! Easter has happened! Yes, it has happened. That is a biggest surprise ever. That is the News that shakes the whole world!

Who are we? We Christians are people who believe Easter that happened beyond our common sense and beyond our understanding. Some people ridicule and make fun of us, Christians, saying, “You guys are foolish. You believe something scientifically unproved and unexplainable.” They are right we are foolish from the eyes of the world. We are foolish people who believe unbelievable “does not make sense at all” Easter story.

One of the mistakes we often make is we try to take something that does not make sense, out of our Christian faith. I heard some television evangelists try to persuade and convince people that Christianity makes sense 100 %. They tell people that we can easily understand and logically explain who God is and what God has done. They even tell that the miracles and healings and the accounts of Jesus' birth and death and resurrection can be explained logically and proved scientifically. Really? Do you think so? Not me.

I do think it wastes time and energy to analyze all the miraculous and mysterious stories in the Bible and try to make sense out of them. Rather I think we should see and accept with humility and reverence all the miraculous and amazing and unbelievable things God has done and is doing in this world.

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Yes, God does something unbelievable and something beyond our intelligence. Yes, something radical.

Who are we? We are God's people who believe in God who does something wow and radical. We think and do things radical like God does. How radical are we?

We believe that we too can live because Jesus the Christ lives. As a matter of fact, we believe we never die. That is radical.

We can face tomorrow and even death without fear because Jesus the Christ lives. Death is not the end. That is radical.

We too can love because God so loved the world and came and lived and died and risen again. We can love one another and even love our enemies as Jesus has loved us. This is wow and radical.

We can turn the other cheek when someone slaps us; we can forgive our sisters and brothers because we are forgiven by God through Christ.

We can accept others who are different from us, those who don't think like us, don't speak like us, don't eat like us and don't look like us, as Christ has accepted us as we are. This is radical.

When the world says, "Yes" to violence, discrimination, and hatred, we say, "No" to them, because of the risen Christ in whom "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female." (Gal 3:28)

Yes, we are the church who "Where there is hatred, we sow Love. Where there is injury, we share Peace. Where there is doubt, we bring faith. Where there is despair, we bring Hope. Where there is darkness, we bring Light. Where there is sorrow, we bring joy." This is radical.

Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. So we, Easter people are radical people to bring the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

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There is one more about how radical we are. We Easter people are radical because we see and hear the risen Christ every day. Yes, we meet the risen Christ every day. Wow. It is radical. **Where** is the risen Christ now?

Back to the ranch. The verse 7: A young man dressed in a white robe told the women, "But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." The risen Christ is going ahead of his disciples to Galilee. Why Galilee?

Galilee was a town they were from, where they spent for about 3 years with Jesus. They had family and friends and co-workers in Galilee. The risen Christ as promised was going to Galilee ahead of them and waiting for them there.

Where is your Galilee? My Galilee? The risen Christ is waiting to meet with us in our Galilee.

The risen Christ is waiting for you at your home as "the Unseen Guest at Every Meal and the Silent Listener to every Conversation." Amen! He is waiting for you at your work place as unseen customer and co-worker, silently listening and also affirming and empowering and encouraging. He is waiting for you at the store you shop as unseen clerks, listening and serving you.

Our Galilee is where we do encounter the ups and downs of life. That is where we have laughter and cry, pain and loneliness, wrestling and struggling, despair and worries. That is where the risen Christ meets with us.

Paul Valery, a French poet said, "The best way to make your dreams come true is to wake up." How true it is. I say this morning "The best way to meet the risen Christ in our midst of Galilee is to wake up."

It was a rainy and chilly winter day some years ago. I joined about a dozen youth to run the Midnight run to visit with some goods and sandwiches the homeless sisters and brothers in Manhattan. It was at the last stop. I handed a man a bag of sandwiches and headed back to the van, when I heard him saying to me, "Brother, drive home carefully. The road must be slippery." I was mesmerized by what I heard. Don't I have a place to go and sleep dry under the roof? Doesn't he have no place to keep him dry? Does he? What is it that I received the caring and kind words from a homeless brother? Somehow I was awakened to see and hear the risen Christ present and talking to me.

The risen Christ is waiting to welcome and meet us where we meet with the hungry, the thirsty, the strange, the naked, the prisoner, the lonely and the sick, that is the least among us. (Matthew 25:31-40)

When do we meet the Risen Christ?

"How do you know Jesus is risen from the dead?" A Sunday school boy asked one of the long-time church members one day. She replied with a big smile on her face, "I talked with him this morning. He is alive."

Yes, when we pray at home or on the road or read the Bible alone or with others, we meet him. He talks with us and walks with us. We meet him anytime two or three of us gathers in his name. He has promised to be present (Matthew 18:20). He is here with us right now and every Sunday. When we celebrate the communion, the Lord's supper (as we will do this morning), we will meet the Risen Lord. He comes to us in the bread and wine. He has promised to be present.

We meet the Risen Christ in our Galilee. We meet the Risen Christ in our praying, praising, breaking the bread and drinking the cup, and loving one another.

That is why we sing with thanksgiving, "And he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I am his own." That is why we, Easter people come together to praise God joyfully today and every Sunday.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Amen. Amen.