

April 17, 2022
Easter Sunday!

Luke 24:1-12

“Lookin’ for Love in All the Right Places”

As we gather on this joyful day – in celebration of God’s victory and the birth of hope which never dies – it can be hard for us to allow the wonder of God’s amazing work in Jesus to embrace us. There is *wonder and mystery* beyond reconning here – but we live in *a broken world* and few of us are overconfident about how the sadness of any age will be resolved.

As we seek to engage what God is doing and how God is doing it – Let’s look back at the week we have just traveled. Jesus offered love, was rejected, tortured, and killed: it has been a time drenched in overwhelming loss. This helps us understand the inability of the men to believe the women who came to them with good news of resurrection.

Luke is one who easily broadens the scope of God’s love and people – and here we see the women who followed Jesus at center stage and the men not doing so well. But it isn’t a fair comparison, is it? The women get the inside scoop from heavenly visitors and the men are still stuck in the reality of loss and death.

It is easy for us to be with those unbelieving disciples on any given day – *worn down by harsh realities* life has dealt us and unsure of how to go on. So, *let’s take a page from the women* to see how to look for the surprising love of God in difficult circumstances and find a way forward.

First, the women came to the tomb that morning. They came to the tomb to do what tradition told them they could. Think of this as ***choosing the option of faithfulness***. What do you do when you don’t know what to do? *Do what you can to be faithful*. That’s what they were doing – walking in the pre-dawn darkness without knowing if the details would work out to be able to anoint Jesus’ body – only knowing it felt right and they were going to try. Friends, the number of times in *our lives, relationships, work and even church* when we don’t know what to do can be discouraging. But on this Easter day the women who followed Jesus show us the way. Choosing faithfulness, the best we know how, turns out to be a winning strategy.

After they got to the tomb, they did not find it as they expected. The stone – which had surely worried them – was already moved away – and when they peeked inside – the body of the crucified one was gone. Gone. **They made the good faith effort - and encountered confusion and uncertainty.** Don't rush past this moment. We have been here before and we will be again. This is the place we want to avoid – the place we don't want to be – *and it is the place we encounter God's word.* **When we are working so hard to make sense of what we see – because we didn't expect it – is a good time to listen and learn.**

The women hang in there and listen to the word of the Lord from God's messengers. They are reprimanded a bit – “Why do you seek the one who lives among the dead?” But it is not a deal breaker that they *are looking for love in all the wrong places.* Their faithfulness opened their lives to the new thing God was doing and as they listen along the way they made course corrections to wind up on God's path.

But it wasn't just the word of the Lord from the angels – **it was that those words sparked memories.** *“Don't you remember he told you?”* And they did. Memory, it turns out, is *more important than trying to psych out the unknown future.* A pastime we struggle to give up. *Inspired memory can make sense out of the past, clarify the present and set us on a God given course for the future.*

Let's take our cue from these women of faith – let's find courage as God's children to rejoice in Easter because the future isn't so intimidating. **We too can follow the paths of faithfulness, listen for the word of the Lord, and unleash the life-giving power of memory.**

This Easter – may we receive grace to look for God's love in ***all*** the places.