**Go and Tell**

**Easter Sunday, Narrative Lectionary**

April 21, 2019

Matthew 28: 1-10 Russell Mitchell-Walker

Jesus was dead, killed in a most brutal fashion. The Romans killed a lot of people, and usually it was quick and dirty. But Jesus was flogged, mocked, marched through the streets, stripped, nailed to the cross, and taunted. It would have been devastating for his followers to witness and experience. That was the point. The Judean and Roman authorities wanted not only to kill Jesus but to kill the movement, kill any hope they might have had of carrying on. However, God’s loving power is greater than any violence and death. The women in todays story from Matthew go to see the tomb. In other gospels they go to anoint the body, wondering how they might roll the stone away. The two Marys’ go to see. They were faithful followers and could be remembering that Jesus said he would rise on the third day. So they went to see, holding on to a glimmer of hope. They were likely expectant and anticipating, but they could not have expected what they experienced. A great earthquake occurs, just as one occurred when Jesus died in Matthew, and an angel rolls back the stone and sits on it. They are told not to be afraid, that Jesus is not there, he has been raised, as he said. Then they are told to go quickly and tell the others that Jesus is alive and going ahead to Galilee where he will see them all. Their expectation and anticipation turn into a mix of fear and joy!

Go and tell. They are to go and tell the good news of resurrection, of new life! Jesus has been raised from the dead! Being church these days can be a challenge as we know too well. Yet there is life, maybe even new life. If you are an active member of this community of Eastside, what new life and joy do you experience in this community that you could share with others? There are people here today you may not know or may not have seen for a while, I invite you to go and tell someone after church, what you have experienced as new life. If you are not as active or are a guest this morning, what new life have you experienced in your community? Go and tell someone about it! Once a month we have a community dinner, that has drawn a group of people not connected to this church, as well as people from the church. One person, Amy, has connected with Sam and Delia who are newer with us, who live in her building. Through this friendship and her knowing another friend who attends here, Debbie Menz, she has started coming to Film & Faith - another one of our programs - we go to a movie and discuss the spiritual themes in it. While Amy does not consider herself religious, she has been really enjoying the community, connection, and discussion of Film and Faith. She has told us she feels supported and appreciates our time together.

Go and tell how the resurrection affirms Jesus’ life and vindicates that all he did and said was right and good. Easter resurrection, raising Jesus from the dead, is God’s response to the bleak abandonment of the crucifixion. The guards, who fall down like dead men, can represent the powers of the day, the Roman and Judean authorities. Jesus, as a leader of the marginalized, the powerless, was killed by the powers. Jesus comes to life, and the powerful collapse. On Good Friday I mentioned in my sermon how John refers to Jesus as the lamb of God and Jesus is dying just as the paschal lamb are being sacrificed. I noted that the paschal lamb is not for the atoning of sin but for remembrance of God’s liberation of the Israelites out of slavery and into freedom. In like manner, then, dying on the cross through the Crucifixion is a liberative message of defeating the powers that oppress, and showing the systems of injustice the folly of violence and death. Now we can celebrate and acknowledge that the resurrection of Jesus affirms the folly of the system of violence. God’s love and justice overcomes death. The Preaching Peace commentary names it as: “Jesus’ life, death and resurrection are the end of human culture founded upon violence and the opening of the Way of the kingdom of God, the way of life and light, joy and peace, reconciliation and love.” Go and tell this good news, that Jesus’ way of loving one another, loving our neighbour, and living forgiveness, is the way forward.

Go and tell your experiences of resurrection. Where and when have you experienced new life or transformation in your life? These stories are often connected with pain and suffering, as we cannot have resurrection without crucifixion or some kind of pain or death. When we experience this pain, it is important to be with it and not try to move to quickly out of it. When we truly experience it, and work through it, that is when the most transformation can happen. This may be the reason we hear about hitting bottom as an important turning point for those who live with addictions. Our oldest son Tyler, is Ojibway and as much as we tried to encourage him and provide opportunities for him to learn about his culture and history, the shame he learned early on from our society and culture, crushed that interest. He went through many years struggling with his identity and through those struggles developed addictions. After hitting bottom two years ago, he has a new life. He has a wonderful fiancé who is Cree and Saulteaux, from Gordon First Nation. She has helped him begin to claim his culture and learn more about who he is and where he is from, in ways birth mother couldn’t. This week, he told us that they want to go to Ontario to visit that nation he is from, on Christian Island, the Beausoleil First Nation. They are looking to see what opportunities are there and possibly move there. It has been a real transformation to see how far he has come from those days of struggling with addiction to being more proud of who he is and open to experiencing and fighting for his culture.

As we celebrate the incredible story of resurrection, may we go and tell our experiences of new life in the church, in our community, and the transformations we have experienced in our lives. May we share the power of God’s love, and live out the love and compassion of Jesus, that God affirmed through his resurrection. He is Risen, Alleluia! Thanks be to God.