

“Alive!”
Acts 10:34-43; I Corinthians 19-26
Luke 24:1-12

Pastor Norman Fowler
First Presbyterian Church
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In the cool of the morning, the women walked along the road. It was dusty, rough. They were a rather quiet group. Perhaps some were wondering what was ahead of them; perhaps some of them were wondering what had happened. It had seemed like such a wonderful start. Great things were happening and now it seemed to be at an end. Only this task to take care of. And so they arrived at the tomb. The stone was rolled away. They looked in, wondering, and finding no body. They were perplexed. They didn't know what was going on. They wondered what was up. Maybe some of us wonder what God is up to.

The women met two men, dazzling, and bowed down before them -- God's messengers before them and they heard, what we might call, the first Easter sermon - really two questions and two statements. So it was short Easter sermon. They simply asked, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” As they had come, surely they must have thought that they were at the end, that this was a dead-end road and they were asked, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” They found out that God was not about to have a dead-end in Jesus. It was not a dead-end idea; it was not a dead-end life. It was God's gift to us. It didn't stop at the cross.

“He has risen,” they said. All that he has done had not stopped here at this ugly cross. He's alive! He goes ahead. Remember what he said? Do we remember what he said? Remember how he offered us so many ways to live. Remember how he offered to heal us and make us new, to wash us clean and give us new life? He wasn't talking about how we die. He wasn't talking about just the art of dying. He was inviting us to walk beyond death with him and know the power of God, the wonder of the resurrection - the very grace of God come into our lives.

As we walk with those women again to an empty tomb, what does it mean? Just something that happened 2000 years ago? The men said “he's alive”. He's still alive. His resurrection, his life for us - not only his death for us - sure, he takes our sins to the cross (and I'm grateful they are gone!) but I'm grateful for the resurrection as well because we get to move on. We get to live life.

Sometimes I feel like we think about Easter, we think about the day of resurrection and it just becomes a bunch of words. What is resurrection? What was all that about? I think it happens to come home to me when I experience it again, when I meet Jesus, sometimes in the most unexpected ways. Sometimes it's through Scripture, how a particular scripture burns in my mind until I pay attention to it. Sometimes it's when I recognize the love of God coming through the very people next to me. Sometimes it's when I've fallen flat, feel a failure, know I'm a failure and there's a hand that reaches out and picks me up again. That's Christ offering us new life in the resurrection, that we can live in the light of the resurrection, that we know a God who doesn't die on us -- not

forever, but a God that lives ahead of us and invites us to follow -- follow him into that life, the light of the resurrection and live there. To live as those who know the forgiveness; recognize the gift of love that is available and the draw, the following, the opportunity we have not to go down the dead-end streets, but the one that's ever lasting. That's why I'm here. Without him, I'm not sure I could do much. But it is because of his death, his life and his resurrection, the gift that's he's given us, his teachings - his living it out and his going ahead. Thank God. He is risen. He is risen indeed! Amen.