

The Resurrection of our Lord
April 21, 2019

Text: Luke 24:1-12

Theme: “Last Words/Tell”

I have a tale to tell today. It's one some of you have heard before. It happened a long time ago, over 42 years ago, but I still remember it well. It involves a rock like this one. But the rock of the tale was bigger, probably about 200 pounds, though I don't think I ever weighed it. It is it life changing story? It could have been a life ending story. The rock I speak of ended up in the front seat of the car leaning against me. My car had been struck by a falling rock. And yes, there were signs along the road telling me to watch for just such an event. It tore the roof of the car back and pressed it against my head rest. If the car and the rock would have met about .02 seconds later (if you want to know how I came up this number, ask me later) I probably would not have survived my rock encounter. Then I would not have met Nancy two years later. We would never have had three children. I would not have been called as Pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran in 1987. You would not be hearing this message now. Yet, none of us would know what we were missing.

There is another story to tell today, no tale, the truth. It's history changing. It also involves a rock, probably limestone. It was round and weighed maybe a couple of tons. It raised attention because it was not where it was supposed to be. It was out of place. It revealed that something else, or someone else was out of place. So it was thought, but so really it was not. There was nothing out of place. It was all as it had been told.

“Remember how He told you (v. 6).” Yes, Jesus had told what was going to happen to Him in Jerusalem. He had told it more than once. In Luke 9:51 we learn that Jesus had

set His face to go to Jerusalem. So He and the apostles traveled down from Galilee, through Samaria and into Judea. He had been doing a lot of teaching along the way. He Luke 18 He had an encounter with a rich ruler who wanted to know what he could do to inherit eternal life. He didn't like Jesus' answer. His reaction was telling. He become very sad. Shortly after this Jesus is very clear in His telling as to what will happen in Jerusalem. "And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³² For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. ³³ And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise." (Luke 8:31-33) Then we read, "But they understood none of these things. These sayings were hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said." (v. 34) Why is this? It didn't fit their plans, their understanding. What Jesus was telling them was in conflict to what they so desperately wanted to be true. The truth Jesus told was like rock stuck under their sleeping bag.

Jesus continued to tell. He told on the night He was to be betrayed. "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Luke 22:16) "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.'" (Matthew 26:31, 32) Yes, the truth had been told.

Today the angels tell. The women are told what they have been told before. The dazzling angels tell the women they are looking in the wrong spot. They didn't use this expression, but why would you look for figs on a thistle, but they did say, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (v. 5) The Living Lord would not be residing in a tomb.

The living don't hang out with the dead. Again, the angel brings to mind the telling. "Remember how He told you even while He was still in Galilee. We have two such recorded tellings in Luke. Before the transfiguration He said, "The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised." (9:22) And after that amazing and stunning sight of the transfiguration He said, "Let these words sink into your ears. The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." (9:44) They didn't sink very far. Again, we read they did not understand and were afraid to ask." (v. 45)

Yes, a lot of telling had been told. And now there is more from the women, the whole group: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary mother of James and the others." (v. 10) They tell the Eleven and the rest. Each of the women had the same thing to tell and maybe each wanted to tell it in her own way. It was not well received, not believed to be credible so it was not believed. We read that it seemed to those who were hearing the telling as "an idle tale" (v. 11, *lepros, lhros*). To those hearing it was like gibberish or baby talk. Just a little later the two disciples on the road to Emmaus tell the mysterious traveler that "some women of our company amazed us" with a tale about not finding the body and a vision of angels. (24:22, 13)

The truth had been told and no there was much that was telling, telling action or inaction. The fact that the women came wondering who would roll back the stone and came bearing spices was telling to what they expected to find. What if they had believed before; what would they have done? Maybe they would have come to witness a glorious event. Perhaps spices could have been brought to pour on the feet of the Living Lord as Mary Magdalene had done before His death at Bethany (John 12:3).

The reaction of Jesus' disciples was certainly telling as Jesus told, told, and retold what was going to happen. Their puzzlement was telling that was no suffering chapter, page, or even paragraph in their book of the Messianic kingdom. What would a believing but not fully understanding response look like? It could have been like that of Mary at the wedding of Cana when she had said, "Do whatever He tells you." (John 2:5) Or it could have been like that of father of the demon possessed boy of whom we read of in Mark 9, "I believe, help my unbelief." (v. 24) Their receiving the telling of the women as nonsense was very telling.

So here we are. Celebrating the glorious news of the resurrection of Jesus once more. What do our actions and words say about its impact on our day to day live? Do we appear as those often controlled by the sinful nature, those who seem to have forgotten what had happened in baptism? We died to sin and were raised with Christ to walk in newness of life, but would it appear we may think we have died to condemnation and been raised to indulge the desires of the flesh?

Disappointment comes in life. Do we walk around as though all is lost? Can we give the impression that since the resurrection God has just become worn out and maybe is tired of delivering or is fed up with forgiving? Do we have a hard time getting out of our Good Friday black? Are we keeping this great news of the resurrection to ourselves?

Back to Jerusalem. The world of the followers of Jesus had really been rocked. When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, it looked like the plan was cruising along. The events before the end of that week would be like a big rock crashing through their Messianic car crushing hope.

But what had happened was no such accident. It was the plan. This is no tale, but the truth about The Rock. This is the tossed one, the One the Jews thought they were

getting no where with, but by the end of the week they had really gotten somewhere, right where they wanted it to be. There was no room in their house for what appeared to them to be some loose, rolling stone, from Galilee. Yes, their plan had succeeded but didn't stay successful. The rolled back stone is evidence of their failure. The angel had rolled it back, all by himself. It was quite the frightful experience for the soldiers on guard. The displaced stone was not out of place, no, just in the right place. Now those who came would have something to see. They could see the linen cloths, but they saw no body, no Jesus.

He was up and out and starting to make His resurrection known in the flesh. Yes, the Stone the builders rejected had become the cornerstone. We read in our epistle lesson for today, "If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.²² **For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.**²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:19-23)." Christ is the firstfruit, raised never to die again. The news of Easter is like that first ripe strawberry. This berry is sweet and delicious, but there is a lot more to come. The harvest to come so much bigger.

Jesus tells again, tells after what He has told before. The crucifixion is not a car wreck, not a smashup of salvation, but necessary for the work of salvation. He asks the two disciples on a mournful walk to Emmaus, "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things before He entered His glory (24:26)?" Later that day He opened the minds of the gathered apostle to understand the Scripture that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead (24:45).

So the apostles were told and now they believe. They would tell, tell, and retell. Their refusal to stop telling even in the face of punishment and death is telling to their conviction that what they were telling was the truth. So we tell:

The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad,
The passover of gladness, The passover of God.
From death to life eternal, From sin's dominion free,
Our Christ has brought us over With hymns of victory. (LSB, 478, stanza 1)

It's time to take off the black, time to dazzle with the telling of the good news. He is not here. He is risen just as He said! For His sake. Amen