



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### June 12, 2022

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

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#### After the Storm: Tomb Time

Depression can feel like death. It is death of the self. It is death of motivation. It is death of joy. I have never been clinically diagnosed, so I must tread lightly (I think in our culture we throw around technical mental health terms much too loosely). Yet I do believe that I have experienced deep times of depression. I can point to a few times in my life when getting out of bed was difficult, when interacting with friends felt like I was going through the motions, when small actions took great energy that I just didn't seem to have.

Trauma can trigger depression. Trauma can be acute or chronic. I believe that we have experienced a great trauma as a culture. We have gone through an unprecedented event that has affected our children, damaged our economy, rattled our political institutions, and called into question the very structure of our society.

I believe that responding to our collective trauma is one of the most important roles of the church today. We are uniquely equipped to speak to trauma. It is a part of our story. It is an foundational element to our Biblical story. The traumas of slavery in Egypt, exile in Babylon, and the crucifixion of our Lord shaped our Biblical story. The response to trauma of exodus, exile, and crucifixion gives us a wealth of knowledge, experience, and language to help people and communities heal. But we must be willing to speak clearly and honestly about what we have experienced.

Jesus and his followers experienced an incredible emotional, physical, and spiritual trauma on Good Friday. They also experienced miraculous, world-changing, death-defying resurrection on Easter Sunday. But what about Saturday?

During the last week of Lent, there are several important days. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday are full of ritual, remembrance, and deep meaning. Saturday however, is a day we think much less about. It doesn't even have a memorable name. It's just Holy Saturday because there's not much to say about it.

Church tradition however, says a lot about Holy Saturday. In fact, our Apostles' Creed has line in it that comes directly from what the Church thought happened on Holy Saturday.

The Catholic version of the Apostles Creed includes these lines: "he was crucified died, and was buried; he descended into hell and on the third day he rose again from the dead."

What does it mean to say that Jesus descended into hell? This idea comes from 1 Peter 4:6, "For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead." The idea is that on Holy Saturday, Jesus descended into the realm of the dead and shared the good news with all who had come before.

Ecumenical versions of the Creed help a little with a particular translation issue. The line "descended into hell" is not about properly understood to be about going to a place of torment. Other versions of the creed say "descended to the dead." This portrays a more accurate understanding of what was happening. Jesus descended to the realm of the dead. He really, literally died. He did not avoid this part of the human experience. What's more, he went to the same place of every other human who had died and proclaimed the Good News.

He preached the good news to the dead. I think many of us have experienced "descended into hell" recently. We have experienced the effects of depression and trauma. We have felt the hopelessness and torment. We have wondered, like Jesus on the Cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" We must remember that Jesus descended too. Too often church people want to brush past the trauma. We want to skip to the good news. We don't see the depression as a valid part of the faith journey. We see it as something to avoid, pretend didn't happen, and move forward.

Jesus preached the good news to the dead. You who are dead, hear the good news. You who have experienced that kind of dead-ness, hear the good news. You who know trauma and depression and deep forsakenness, hear the good news.

I came today to tell you that I have descended into hell, but somehow I heard the good news. Do not pretend that the descent didn't happen, but also know that the good news of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection is good news even to the dead.