



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

April 16, 2023

Faith and Doubt on Easter

Recap of Sermon from 4/16/23 by Robb McCoy
Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

I walked by the chapel on my way to lunch. “Come in,” my heart whispered. It was still racing a little. I didn’t want to stop. The adrenaline was still flowing after meeting at three different offices on Capitol Hill. At each office, I was with colleagues from the General Board of Church and Society. Surrounded by my sisters in Christ, we made our case on behalf of maternal health and family planning around the world in front of two Senators and a Congressman.

We walked the halls of the Temples of Power and strode purposefully across the Capitol. It was an incredible experience to gain access to some of the most powerful people in the world. As I walked into the Dirksen Senate Office Building, I felt a sudden surge of desperation. I knew my facts. I knew the stories. Yet I was suddenly faced with the grandeur of it all and doubted. “Who am I?” I thought. Surrounded by so much marble and glass, I could not help but feel the power of my own insignificance.

Now back at the United Methodist Building for a short break, I was feeling exhausted. I was feeling overwhelmed. The task at hand seemed too big. The power that I faced seemed too mighty. “Come in,” my heart beckoned. I walked into the chapel of the United Methodist Building. I stepped a few rows in, past another taking a similar pause, and sat. I breathed. My heart slowed. My mind opened. I prayed.

In that little chapel I worshipped as I doubted. I prayed of exhaustion and futility. I prayed a lamentation over my own frailty and inability to make a difference. I prayed and sunk deeper into my chair as the Spirit washed over me. Then I saw the Bible, once again my heart beckoned, “Come.” I opened the Bible, and read the first verse my eyes focused on, “When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching. They asked, “What kind of authority do you have for doing these things? Who gave you this authority?” (Matthew 21:23, [Common English Bible](#)).

In today’s passage, Jesus tells us about his authority. He reminds the disciples that all authority is his, and that it comes from God. Then he gives them a job to do. It must have felt overwhelming. There he was, on a mountain of Galilee telling 11 guys – and probably the women who followed him – to “go

into the world.”

The world? Really? And what are they supposed to do? “Baptize people and teach them to obey me.” Really? Is there any wonder why that moment on the mountain in Galilee there was worship and there was doubt? Most translations make it sound like there were some who worshipped and some who doubted. Other translations suggest that the line should be “They worshipped while they doubted.” In other words, the moment (like most of the Easter stories) was fraught with confusion. There was great joy and worship, yes. But there was also doubt.

There must have been doubt at the possibility of doing this thing that Jesus was telling them to do. So he reminded them, (in my paraphrase) “All that I have said and done, I have done with God’s authority,” and he reminds them, “I was right all along – they tried to destroy me. They tried to stamp out the good news. They tried to erase my teaching and my Way, but here I am. I am here, and now it’s your turn, but I’ll be with you the whole time.”

Perhaps he brought them to the mountain of Galilee to remind them of the things he taught them there. If they wondered how and what they could possibly do – a handful of disciples facing the world – he told them what to do: Teach and obey. Remember that you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Remember to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Remember to break cycles of violence, resist exploitation, and pursue justice and peace. Remember to follow not just the letter of the rules, but the loving heart of the Law.

It must have felt daunting. These things that he taught were as strange then as they are now, but they were as victorious now as they were then. Christ is the Victor over the grave. He is the victor over a Roman cross. The only way to face down the halls of power, the only way to tear curtains, the bring walls, and live into the Kingdom of Heaven is to teach and obey what he taught.

We who follow Christ on this Way of baptizing, teaching, and obeying, are given a daunting task. I came here to tell you that if you feel like you don’t have the power to change the world, it’s okay. You don’t have to. If you’re tired and worn out by the task, it’s okay. You can claim the power of Christ and know that the change will come on his authority. The disciples worshipped and they doubted. It must be okay if we do

Next Sunday: Matthew 28:16-20, The Gospel of Matthew ends with the Great Commission