



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

March 31, 2024 Easter Sunday

Deeper Relationship with Others

Recap of sermon from March 31, 2024

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Jesus's first words in the Gospel of John (1:39) are "Come and see." He is talking to his first disciples, inviting them into a relationship with God that will lead to eternal life. He invites them to come and see, and the first amazing thing he demonstrates is an intimate knowledge of Nathanael. Nathanael asks him, "How do you know me?" Jesus finishes this first conversation "You will see greater things than these!"

Indeed they would. The Gospel of John is structured around seven signs, each growing in power and amazement. They include turning water into wine, feeding the multitudes, healing a man born blind, and culminates with the raising of Lazarus. These are the things the disciples are invited to "Come and see."

All the while, they are invited to abide with Christ. They are invited to know his voice, and recognize him for who he is: The Good Shepherd. This is the Way to eternal life, life that is marked with abundance, grace, generosity, healing, and trust. The entirety of Jesus' life and ministry is to give the disciples a chance to come and see what it looks like when love walks the earth. They are invited to not just believe in Christ, but abide in Christ. During his farewell in John 15, Jesus told them:

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

From the first moments, Jesus is interested in invitation into a deeper relationship. It is not surprising then, that his first words after Resurrection are a question. He says to Mary Magdalene, "Woman, why are you crying?" He does not tell her "stop crying," or "it will be all right." Even in resurrection, he is seeking deeper relationship.

Maybe this is where our good news can start, too. There is a question, a deeper knowledge, and an honest answer to the question, "Why are you crying?" We can begin with the guilt or shame of our own failures; or the anxieties of job, work, family struggles. Surely we can cry over the hurting and lonely in our communities. I know I can cry over the overwhelming presence of evil, oppression, injustice in the world. In short, we can cry over a crucified messiah. We can cry because the power that killed love on Good Friday still seems to reign.

Like Mary, we cry over the death of love, hope, generosity. We cry over the demonization of others. We cry over the deep sense of



loss and confusion that came with a Roman instrument of terror and torture.

And then, like Mary, our perspective can change in an instant. When Jesus calls her by name, she remembers. He does not tell her to stop crying. Instead he reminds her of their relationship. In this sign of friendship and intimacy, there is new life. He calls her by name and that is enough. She knows that he is Jesus, and that he is alive. She knows that the abundance, grace, generosity, healing and trust that he embodied did not stay dead.

The last thing he tells her is "Go and tell." Go and tell others that I am alive! She becomes the first apostle, telling others of the good news that Christ is alive.

As disciples today, we follow the same pattern. Every Sunday — and the days in between — we come and see what is happening. We are invite to come and see the signs of healing, reconciliation, generosity, and growth. On Easter our calling is like Mary's.

Our tears are still real, but when Christ calls us by name our perspective can change. We can "Go and Tell" that hope is alive. Go and tell how Christ has changed your life. Go and tell about a community of faith that is alive and well. Go and tell about a church that is trying to embody the beloved community that Jesus created. Go and tell about a church that is willing to feed the multitudes, welcome the immigrant, love the despised, and tell the truth in hope of true repentance and reconciliation.

Go and tell of a church that knows the living Christ and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. Go and tell others that Christ is alive, that we are transformed, and then invite them to come and see.

Next Week: The Empty Tomb Retold
Matthew 28:1-10