



SERMON RECAP

APRIL 5, 2026

Easter Sunday
“Called to New Life”
Matthew 28:1-20

“This is the story of God’s love for the people God loves.” This is what our reader says every Sunday after reading the Scripture passage. The people respond, “Thanks be to God.” This is easier some weeks than others. This Sunday however, it doesn’t feel like enough.

This is THE story of God’s love. All through Lent, and in Holy Week in particular, we have been telling the story of human cruelty. We told the story of the unholy marriage of empire and religious institution. We told the story of fearful men who tried to cling to their position and status through coercion and fear. We told the story of betrayal, despondency, and shame. The story of Jesus’ death is a story of fear, violence, and exploitation.

It is still the dominant story of our culture. This is the story we are told every day of our lives - that we are not enough, that scarcity must drive us, that our worth is in our consumption, that we must obey or else. The religious story most people hear is one of an angry God who demanded Jesus’ blood and now demands our allegiance or else. The empire story most people hear is about dominance and forcing a monolithic culture upon the world in the name of progress. With the rise of Christian Nationalism today, we are living in the midst of an ever more-popular story told by the unholy marriage of empire power and religious institutions.

But this story we read today - the story of Resurrection - is not that story. It is the story of God’s love for the people God loves. It is the story that reminds us that crucifixion is not the end. This story is a dangerous story. It is a story so threatening that since it’s first telling, the powerful were trying to cover it up.

Matthew’s gospel tells us of the misleading machinations of Rome and the Elders. They knew that the story of Resurrection was not one that they could allow to be told. So they started a program of misinformation and lies. They tried to obscure the reality with rumor, innuendo, and misinformation. It is a familiar play in the playbook of Empire. It is a play that we see being used today. Sew misunderstanding and mistrust, and the story of love can be obscured, but the women didn’t let it happen.



The Maundy Thursday storm produced an incredible double rainbow over the Quad Cities, and our friend Brandi from the Skeleton Key snapped a photo for us. A little bit of photoshop manipulation turned it into this “impressionist painting.”

The women showed up that day because they wanted to see. They wanted to see - not just the place where they laid him - but the place where he promised something might happen. They came to see God do one more great thing. What they found was an empty tomb, sticken guards, and an angel of God. Then, on their way to doing what the angel told them to do, the women encountered Christ. They did not fully understand. The morning was full of confusion and fear, but they heard the call and in the midst of their response, Jesus met them. He told them go back to where the story began.

Hear THE story of God’s love: all the cruelty, fear, and violence did not have the last word. The women heard the message, and in the midst of their telling, they found out that love wins. The story of Resurrection is a story of love. It is a story of truth winning over lies. It is a story of abundance, grace, forgiveness, and community.

Jesus met them on the mountain in Galilee, the place where he preached the Sermon on the Mount. If you want the details of the story, go back to Matthew 5-7. Turn the other cheek, pursue authentic relationship with God, follow the heart of the Law, and build your life on the Way of Jesus. This is the story worth telling. It is a dangerous story. The dominant story of our culture tries to obscure it with lies about power greed, but Jesus’ story leads to Resurrection. It leads to eternal, meaningful, truthful life.

Hear the story and then go and tell the story! Tell the story of love, community, and kinship that people need to hear. Obey Jesus’ command to love each other and love yourself. You have heard the story, now you are being called to go and tell the story. It is the story of God’s love. And you are the people God loves!

NEXT WEEK:

Called: Yes, even you. 1 Samuel 3:1-15