

-SLIDE- 2007 EASTER –THE ROAD TO RESURRECTION

Luke 24:1-8

Today is Easter Sunday.
Easter is my favorite time of the year.
Its spring eternal in the heart of the church.
We see the tulips come to life, the calves being born,
There is birth all around us.

One time when I was hospital calling at Avera St. Lukes.
The intercom interrupted me with music over the sound system.
If you work at the hospital you know that means a baby has been born.
Everyone smiles. Sense of expectant beginnings.
Then it happened again. And later again.
The music played five times.
Five times new babies entered the world here in Aberdeen.
One of our nurses said: “Busiest morning we’ve had in a long time.”

That reminds me of a young expectant father in New York who was in the waiting room of the hospital as his wife was in delivery Room. The music had played 3 times Being new at this he asked the Nurse receptionist “what’s that music.” Oh she said: “That music plays whenever a baby is born.” He said: “Good grief my wife is in there how do we stop the music?”

We don’t want to stop the music!!
Because there are time when the music doesn’t play.
And we hear the intercom shouts:

Code Blue

Code Blue,

That call always causes the hairs on the back of my neck to stand up.
It’s a life and death situation.
Somebody’s struggling to stay alive or has arrested.
There is a scurry of activity as doctors and nurses pour into the room.
Loved ones pray, machines are rolled, to revive a stilled heart.

But who can resurrect a dead one?

Slide--- **Matthew records 27:50 When Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit and died.**

The soldier knew he died because he **stuck a spear thru his side.**

God knew he died, because he Vs. 51 tore the temple curtain from the top to the bottom.

The EARTH knew he died because The earth shook, the rocks split. 52

The DEAD knew he had died because The tombs broke open and dead people were raised to life. 53 they came out of the tombs and walked about the city and appeared to many people,

THE CENTURIAN KNEW HE DIED BECAUSE he said: Surely he was the son of God. Jesus died

SLIDE--- **I. EASTER HAPPENS IN THE MIDST OF DEATH**

SLIDE-- **On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. Luke 24:1**

The place of the dead.

The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities:
 a virgin's womb and an empty tomb.
 TWO doors: one marked "No Entrance"
 The other marked "No Exit."

When Jesus rose, he showed once and for all that there is no
 Power greater, no sickness more severe, no divorce more final,
 No persecution more painful, no loneliness, despair, addiction more deep,
 No door too closed that the power of the Risen Savior cannot open.
 Jesus stands at your door marked "No Way" and knocks.

What a mess we humans are!
 Thousands of years of looking for life among the dead.
 Thousands of years of turning to money, war, sex, power, and pleasure,
 and has it brought us happiness? Or life?
 We still cannot do for ourselves,
 What Christ must do for us alone.

SLIDE **When the will of God crosses the will of man, somebody has to die.**
 --Addison Leitch

SLIDE Resurrection comes thru death.
 The women came to the tomb expecting to find a body.
 The spices were prepared
 Their feeling had been steeled
 they were ready to pay their last respects
 to the one they had called LORD, their MESSIAH.

But their spices had to be set aside
 for another day,
 for another death.
 Because there was no death at this tomb!
 There was only life!

SLIDE **"Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Luke 24:5b**
 the angels asked, their clothes practically blinding
 the women with radiance.

SLIDE -- **"He is not here, but has risen!" Luke 24:6**
That is the scene described on our East stained glass window of the Resurrection.
Easter resurrection comes to us through death.

SLIDE **When the USS Pueblo, our Navy ship was hijacked by North Korean?**
 The eighty-two surviving crew members were taken into captivity. Thirteen of the men
 were required to sit in a rigid manner around a table for hours. After several hours, the
 door was flung open and a North Korean guard came in and brutally beat the man in the
 first chair with the butt of his rifle. **The next day**, as the men sat at his assigned place,
 the door was thrown open, and the man in the first chair was again brutally beaten. **On**
the third day, it happened again to the same man. Knowing the man could not survive,
 the next day, another young sailor took his place. When the door was flung open, the

guard automatically beat the new victim senseless. For weeks, every day, a new man would step forward to sit in that horrible chair, knowing full well the beating would come. At last the guards gave up in exasperation. They were unable to overcome that kind of sacrificial love. (P 109 Double Bind)

What those men did for one another
Christ did for the whole world.
Only he didn't have anyone to change places with him.

SLIDE **Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: The son of man...will be raised on the third day. Luke 24:6-7**

SLIDE **I. EASTER HAPPENS IN THE MIDST OF DEATH
II. EASTER HAPPENS IN THE MIDST OF DOUBT AND UNBELIEF**

This is for the skeptics of our world.

SLIDE **While they were wondering about this,**
(Other translations say-- perplexed, puzzled.)
suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. Luke 24:4

Don't let despair and doubt or unbelief keep you from EASTER..
God understands.
Easter comes to us through our doubts.

Notice the contagion of doubt and disbelief.

SLIDE **They came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the others. Luke 24:9 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Luke 24:11**

SLIDE **When Jesus appeared to the two men on the Emmaus road
They returned and reported it to them (that Jesus had appeared). But they did not believe them either. In Mark 16:13**

**Easter happens in the midst of doubt.
Contagious doubt.**

Lord Lyttleton was a skeptic and his friend, Gilbert West was a Deist (someone who denies that God intervenes with the laws of nature). Both of these men rejected and doubted Christ and Christianity. They agreed that the two strongest pillars of Christianity were the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the conversion of the apostle Paul. If these could be disproved, Christianity would fall to the ground.

So each decided to write a book.

Lyttleton was to show that Paul's conversion story was a fake.

And **West** was to prove that Christ's resurrection was a myth.

After a period of time they came together again,
and **Lyttleton** said, "How are you getting along with your book?"

West replied, "The more I examine the evidences for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the more convinced I become that the Gospel story is true and that He actually did rise from the dead. And now, my book must be to prove that."

Lyttleton said, "And I have come to the conclusion that the narrative in the book of Acts is absolutely true, and I shall write a book to show that the conversion of the apostle Paul is true and proves Christianity to be a divine revelation."

If Easter depended upon our faith and belief
We would be in deep trouble.
It depended on God's faithfulness and facts.

One of the great advantages of having the
Old and New Testament in one Bible
is that they support each other.
The better we know the OT the better we know the NT Jesus.

SLIDE **"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill."** Matthew 5:17

Don't miss the significance of this on this Easter day.
Especially when other religions such as Islam is on people minds.
If you share the good news of the death and resurrection of Christ with a Muslim
you will find out that Muslim's do not believe
Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose again
but that there was a replacement on the cross,
he escaped death and later was taken to heaven.

SLIDE **Quran, Surah (al-Nisa) 4:156-157:**
...and for their saying (the Jews in boast), ``We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Marium, the Messenger of God" --- yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. Those who are at variance concerning him surely are in doubt regarding him; they have no knowledge of him, except the following of surmise; and they slew him not of a certainty ---.

Muslims in general believe that the central message
of the New Testament and of Biblical Christianity is built on a mistake:
Christ did not die, and Christ did not rise.
Therefore the very heart of Christianity is false.

SLIDE Isaiah 53 was not written by Christians after Christ coming,
To distort or twist it to our understanding.
But Isaiah wrote about the death and resurrection of Christ,
700 years before Christ came.
And what he saw in the future was not a Messiah
who escapes death and resurrection,
but a Messiah who dies deliberately in the place of sinners –
and rises again to make intercession
for his redeemed and forgiven
and justified people for ever.

In Christ your sins can be forgiven,
In Christ you can be declared righteous before god.
In Christ you inherit an eternal life in Heaven with everlasting joy.
There is no **doubt** that you have ---that will keep Jesus dead.

For he is risen.

SLIDE **II. EASTER HAPPENS IN THE MIDST OF DEATH, AND DOUBT DISBELIEF**

III. EASTER HAPPENS IN THE MIDST OF FEAR

SLIDE **While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground... Luke 24:4-5**

Fear is a powerful, unpleasant feeling of risk or danger, either real or imagined. Fear can be distinguished into serious fear, *metus gravis*, and trifling fear, *metus levis*.

Psychologists [John B. Watson](#) and [Paul Ekman](#) have argued that all humans have fear, and it is a defensive motivation to seek safety.

SLIDE **Mark 16:8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.**

When we are in a situation of fear the blood goes to big muscles (like legs) allowing the person to run faster. It releases hormones in the brain centering the attention on the threat always looking for the most accurate reaction.

They ran

They fled from the tomb.

Someone has said there are five basic kinds of fear.

SLIDE Fright is instinctive fear, designed to protect us from physical danger.

Worry is fear produced by our worst imaginings.

Guilt is fear caused by a troubled conscience.

Insecurity is fear prompted by feelings of inadequacy.

Dread is fear generated by life's fundamental uncertainty.

SLIDE The women had a combination of them.

Their Savior was dead

They didn't know where he was.

They didn't know what had happened.

They didn't know what more they could have done.

They didn't know who these angels were.

They didn't know what was to happen to them.

SLIDE "A good scare is worth more to a man than good advice."

---- **Edgar Watson Howe - *Country Town Sayings* (1911)**

THEY FLED.....

THEY RAN.....

There are a lot of things that frighten us today.

We live with fear.

Fear of infectious disease such as, bird flue, Aids

Fear of addictions

Fear of Graduation, marriage, commitments.

Fear of war with Iran, or North Korea,

Fear of what the insurgents and rebels are doing
 Fear that the war we are now in is not with any organized government,
 But with a non-organized mindset of hate and religious propaganda.

A Chinese proverb says:

You don't drown by falling in the water, you drown by staying there.

That is exactly what they were not going to do.

They fled from the tomb.

They ran into Jesus.

SLIDE Suddenly Jesus met them. Greetings, he said. They came and clasped his feet and worshipped him. Matthew 28:9

Where are you fleeing in your fear????

And our world runs to look for answers among the dead.

We run to get our answer about the earth beginnings from a Dead Dr. Darwin,

We run to get our answer to pleasure from a Dead Dr. Freud.

We run to get our answer to Religion from a Dead Mohammad, or Buddha, Joseph Smith.

But our answers are unsatisfied,

And the problems are unsolved.

Until we turn to a living Christ. Jesus of Nazareth

Risen from the Dead.

No wonder the Angels said:

Why do you look for the living among the dead.

He is no here' he has risen.

Easter is for us hope in the midst of our greatest fears.

Greatest words we have here is

SLIDE Matthew 28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them.

Jesus met them.

That is exactly what Jesus will do for you in the midst of your fear.

As your resurrected savior.

1. When your family this year buried a child.

Jesus met you.

2. When your family buried a father, a spouse,

Jesus met you.

3. When your loved one heard that diagnosis of
 Alzheimer's, cancer, leukemia, heart disease.

Friends

Jesus met them.

That's what keeps that widow in comfort.

That's what keeps that child from a divorce family moving on

When we recognize the faith of forever

Because God endorsed Easter with the blood of his son.

Its like a little girl who went to the bank for the first time to cash a check. The teller handed it back to her and said you have to endorse it. She asked, “What does endorse mean?” Teller said, “you have to sign it like you do a letter”.
So she shyly signed Love Linda.

SLIDE God endorsed the death and resurrection of Christ
And he signed it Love God.
Does your heart need a lift today?

It's not that we **don't understand what** God has done.
It's not that we **don't believe what** God has done.
It's not that we **don't think we** need what God has done.

SLIDE **It's just that we haven't gotten down to asking God to do it for us personally.**
That is what makes Easter complete.
The resurrected Heart of Jesus can be yours today.
He is available just for the asking.
Receive him as the Risen Savior and come to know life abundantly.
This RISEN SAVIOR satisfies Death, Doubt, and Fear.
Invite Him into your heart and home today.
On this Easter Sunday I say to you: “Christ is Risen”
Congregation: “He is Risen Indeed”

Almighty God Send us forth in the knowledge and love of a Risen Savior today.
Help us to move past our fears, doubts and disbelief.
To live the Abundant Life that you have given.
I pray in the name of Jesus our Risen Savior.
Amen.