

Easter Sunday Sermon
March 31, 2013

Many of us here grew up listening to our parents and other assorted relatives telling us that if something seemed too good to be true; it probably wasn't. That low mileage car for that sweet price and there's nothing wrong with it, right. Triple your investment overnight, right. And here's the best one—just take this little pill and the weight will melt off of you; no changing what you eat or exercising, right.

Now you know how the disciples felt when the women came rushing back to them after being at Jesus' tomb that they were met by angels and told that Jesus was alive! The translation in our Bible reading is quite generous when it says that they thought the story to be an idle tale. The Greek word used is the root of our word delirious. So to put it another way; their tale was thought to be crazy, nuts or utter nonsense.

And which one of us sitting here today wouldn't have thought so at the time or maybe we might even still think it today. It's a physical fact—the dead stay dead. Oh, but you might argue with me; what about those people that the disciples saw Jesus raise from the dead? Yes Jesus brought Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son and Lazarus all back to life. But there is a slight difference between these and Jesus' resurrection. These people would all have to die again; Jesus won't!

What God has done in raising Jesus from the dead changes all of the rules! It turns all of our neat and orderly rules upside down and throws them out the door—and we can't handle that. So as terrible as death is; at least what happens to a person at death is known to us. And the predictable is in some ways comforting.

But if the resurrection is true, then we are living in a totally new reality and that just scares us and forgive me here, to death!

And then there's the fact that many of us have heard this story of the resurrection over and over again. It's lost its element of wonder and surprise. Sometimes we might need the risen Lord to walk through our doors and down the aisle to wake us out of our complacency. But I wonder, would we believe it even then?

There is one person who after thinking about the women's story gets up and goes to see for himself—Peter. I can imagine what's going through his mind at that moment. He's remembering what Jesus told them about his passion, death and resurrection. The first two predictions have come horribly true; could the third also be true? Because if that last one is true then everything else that Jesus said would also be true; his promises about God's love, forgiveness and grace. So Peter rushes off to the tomb to see for himself; hoping against hope that it's empty like the women claimed it to be.

I'm like Peter; I desperately need those promises to be true! I need to know that God loves me with an unquenchable love; that I'm forgiven all of my sins; that it is God's grace that saves me. I need to hear the resurrection story again and again so that I can believe that God is creating a new heaven and a new earth; that God is redeeming me and all of creation. I need to hear this unbelievable story because it is the only hope that I have that I will be reunited with those I love who have gone before me.

So each Easter I run breathless with Peter to the tomb and wait to here the words that it is empty! Because for me this story is too good not to be true! Amen.