

Easter

Text: Luke 24:1-12

¹On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not



here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷“The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”” ⁸Then they remembered his words. ⁹When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹²Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Theme: What Did You Expect?

What did you expect when you got up this morning. The kids might have expected Easter baskets. You went all around the house looking for them. You might have expected a beautiful warm spring day, but after the way that our spring has gone, I doubt it.

On Friday, we commemorated the death of our Savior; however, we knew that today we would celebrate His resurrection. Today I would like to look at the simple question, “What did you expect?”

I. In difficult times, we often fail to expect good things from God.

Think of Jesus’ followers on Easter morning. The women got up early on Easter morning, even before the sun has risen, to go to the Lord’s tomb. What did they expect? They expected to find a dead body. They brought spices to anoint Jesus’ body. They were still filled with grief over what happened on Good Friday. When the tomb was open and the body was gone, they were perplexed. They never expected that Jesus’ body would be gone. After the angel told them that the Lord had risen, the women ran to tell these things to Jesus’ disciples. Luke writes, “*But they did not believe the women, and their words seemed like nonsense to them.*” The disciples never expected the women to come and tell them that Jesus had risen. There was only one group of people who remembered Jesus’ words and expected something to happen. They were the chief priests and the pharisees. They went to Pilate and asked for a guard at the tomb. They said, “*We remember that while He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’*” (Mt 27:63) They wondered whether Jesus’ followers might remember Jesus’ words and come to steal the body, but not a single one of

Jesus' followers expected anything good on Easter. They were only filled with grief and fear.

We might want to say to them what Jesus said to the Emmaus' disciples, "*How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe...*" (Lk 24:25) But when we think about it, we often fail to expect good things from God in hard times. How often have we found ourselves fretting and worrying with our hearts filled with grief? We do something that we know is wrong. We do our best to try to cover it up or we are so filled with shame that we don't even want to be forgiven. We experience hard times, we get bad news, we have setbacks, we have heavy burdens and crosses to bear, and we moan, groan, and complain as if there is no hope. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul writes that we Christians do not grieve like the rest of men who have no hope because we believe that Jesus died and rose again. But do we ever find ourselves grieving as if there were no hope? We might be amazed at the lack of faith of the women and the disciples. They were not expecting anything good on Easter, but don't we often find ourselves failing to expect good things from the Lord in such hard times?

III. Why do we fail to expect good things from God?

The answer is because we forget God's Word. The most reoccurring phrase in Luke's account of the resurrection is, "**Remember what He told you.**" There were several times when Jesus told His disciples that He would die and rise again, but they didn't listen. For instance in Mark 9 Jesus took the disciples to a solitary place so that He could teach them privately. Mark writes, "³⁰ *Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were,* ³¹ *because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, 'The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.'* ³² *But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.*" Jesus could not have been clearer. They didn't understand however, and they didn't want to understand. They had their ideas of how God should work. When things didn't go according to their plan, they were filled with fear and grief.

The same is true for us. We have an idea of how God should work. That idea is probably that we should have no problems. We should be healthy and wealthy. God should love me just the way that I am. I shouldn't have to change anything about my life. There should be no wars and no disasters in the world.

However, think of what God says. At the end of the Lord's Supper, Jesus told the disciples, "*In the world you will have trouble.*" (Jn 16:33) Jesus told people who were confident that God loved them just the way that they were, that they needed to change. He told repentant sinners, that they were forgiven. He even said, "*You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come...There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.*" (Mt 24:6ff) When we don't expect any trouble, temptation, crosses, disasters or even death to come, we will be devastated when they do come, even though Jesus said that such things will come. We will also fail to expect the deliverance and salvation that God promises at the end.

III. A firm trust in God's word brings confident expectation.

The angel told the women, "*Remember His words.*" When they remembered Jesus' words, it all made sense and they ran to the disciples filled with joy that the Lord had risen. Later the Lord walked

and talked with the two followers on the way to Emmaus. He opened the Scriptures to them, and they ran back and told the disciples in Jerusalem. Finally, the Lord appeared to the 11 when they were locked in a room. He told them, *“This is what I told you while I was still with you...”* Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He said, *“This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations...”* (Lk 24:44ff)

Jesus’ disciples would never forget Jesus’ resurrection, but they would also never forget Jesus’ words. He promised them that He would be with them always to the end of the age. (Mt 28:20) He told them, *“In the world, you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.”* (Jn 16:33) Even when they would be persecuted, imprisoned, slandered, and even martyred, they would remember Jesus’ words and find peace, hope, comfort, and forgiveness in Him.

Knowing Jesus’ words give us that same kind of confidence. When our crosses are heavy, we remember His promise to come to Him when we are weary and burdened for He will give us rest. (Mt 11:28) When our sins fill our hearts with guilt, we remember that He gave His body and shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. When we grieve, we remember His words that He is the resurrection and the life. (Jn 11:28) Faith in Jesus’ Words takes away the fear and gives us confidence and hope throughout our lives until we receive the everlasting life that Jesus’ words promise us.

What do you expect? Do you expect the worst or do you expect God to act? Have you forgotten everything that Jesus has promised? Have you even failed to listen to His words? Or do you listen to our Lord’s promises, take them to heart, and keep them stored there?

When we forget Jesus’ words, we will find ourselves only expecting the worst, just like the women and disciples did on Easter morning, but when we remember Jesus’ words we will go through life confident of God’s love and salvation for us in every situation.

May God’s Spirit open our hearts and minds to Jesus’ word, that we will be filled with Easter joy today and always.

Amen.

***Pastor Don Hougard
Benediction Lutheran Church
Milwaukee, WI
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