

## The Resurrection of our Lord

April 4, 2010

### The Tomb is Empty! What now?

Texts: acts 10:34-43, 1 Cor. 15:19-26, Luke 24:1-12

We stop dead cold when we our expectations are unmet!

Most of us have expectations for many holidays. We have traditions that we long to keep alive for years to come. Easter baskets whether they are hidden or in full view are part of many people's expectations. For many a chocolate Easter bunny in the basket is a must. So you can imagine how devastating it might be for a young person to wake up on Easter Sunday and reach into a beautiful Easter basket only to find a bunny with no ears. Bunnies without ears are wrong and usually mean someone else has eaten them already.

There were expectations that first Easter morning. The women were sad and distressed about Jesus' death. But they knew what to expect when they arrived at Jesus' tomb. In other gospels we hear that the women are concerned about rolling the stone from the opening of the tomb. But in Luke's gospel, there are more women. Maybe the whole circle of ladies travelled to the tomb so that using teamwork they might roll the stone away. We can imagine whether or not the women were worried about the stone being in front of the tomb, but we are certain that they expected the stone to be blocking the tomb's entrance. So their first expectation which is missed is that the stone is already rolled away. But they still plan to put spices on Jesus' body. When they went into the tomb, there is no body.

When our expectations are not met, we have to figure out what to do next. We are stopped in our tracks when something very difference happens. We have to figure out what is happening and what we will do next. The bunny with missing ears might result I accusations against other siblings or even parents. Hopefully it would not result in a fight on Easter Day but it may. It certainly would result in hurt and sorrow. It might be a bit like the Whos in Whoville first waking up on Christmas day after the Grinch attempted to steal Christmas. Hopefully all would be forgiven and the real meaning of Easter would win out without bitter resentments. However the empty tomb on the first Easter would produce a kind of pain, sorrow, and utter confusion that we cannot even fully imagine. You have suffered grief and pain but this is not the same. The women cannot even find Jesus' body and would immediately fear that it had been stolen. What are they going to do?

God intervenes when the women cannot figure out how to respond. Two men, in dazzling white, messengers from God announce that Jesus is alive. Finally the women remember what Jesus was trying to tell them the whole trip to Jerusalem. He was going to die but would rise again. Now the women are ready and eager to share the good news. The expectation were not met, they were exceeded!

But even when the women go to the others to share the good news, they are ignored – it is thought to be idle tales. So Peter himself goes to the tomb and then he began to understand. The book of Acts records how the first disciples shared the good news of forgiveness and new life with the whole known world!

What are our Easter expectations? Are they only to receive candy and maybe a new outfit to show off? Are our Easter expectations to come to church and gather together to sing hymns about Christ being alive? Are we coming just to see the beautiful lilies and eat a good breakfast together? Afterward, what do we do with the empty tomb?

Unfortunately we usually do nothing more with the empty tomb. We expect Jesus to be alive on Easter morning but we really do not expect to see Jesus on the streets on Easter day. We do not truly expect that Jesus' resurrection makes any difference until the day we die! But it should. We are made alive in Christ today, not just at the end of our earthly life.

Today we remember Jesus' words, we come to communion with at Christ's own table. We expect to get weird flat bread in the form of wafers. We expect to get a small sip of wine, but our expectations are not met, they are exceeded. We instead will receive the bread of life – Jesus' own body. We will drink the cup of salvation – Jesus' own blood. We will not have to wait for new life until after this one is over. We are part of God's Kingdom, we are already the children of God now! We are the forgiven and beloved children today. We have new life now! It makes a difference that Christ is alive.

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

Christ is Risen Indeed!