

Luke 24:1-12

Had last Sunday's snowstorm taken place today, the question that many of us would be contemplating is, "Will there be an Easter this year?" The answer would be, "Absolutely yes!" We would keep Jesus in the tomb an extra week, but we would celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Nothing in the entire Church Year makes any sense apart from Easter. Obviously, Lent can only come to an end with Easter. Good Friday is not complete without Easter. Even Maundy Thursday would be pointless. Why celebrate the Sacrament when our Savior is dead? It is the living Christ who comes to give us His flesh and blood every time we come up to His Table. Without Easter, Christmas would have little meaning. So would Pentecost and the Reformation. Easter must be in place for anything in the Christian Faith to make sense.

But not even Easter makes any sense. When the women, who had been to the tomb, told the Apostles the news that Jesus had risen, they did not believe them. These were not gullible men who fell for every trick, scam, and pyramid scheme out there. They listened to the women and they came to the most sensible conclusion. These women were hysterical. This is an idle tale. It's silly talk. It's utter nonsense. So if these women had come with the report that they found Jesus' body just where it was supposed to be, all neatly wrapped up, this they would have believed. But the news of His resurrection they found ridiculous and completely unbelievable.

Let me ask you this morning, what exactly is there about Jesus that is not utter nonsense? His birth from a virgin? His miracles--healing the sick, stilling storms, feeding thousands, raising the dead? Did His teaching make sense, or is it also utter nonsense that He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that no one can be saved apart from Him? Did His Transfiguration make sense? Did His sufferings and death make sense--how He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, how His death ripped the temple curtain in two and shook the earth, which had been plunged into darkness, with a violent earthquake? There is nothing about Jesus that makes sense. His entire life appears to be an idle tale, silly talk, utter nonsense.

So why are you here in church this morning? And why do you live with Easter joy? Why do you remember your baptism into Christ with joy, and celebrate His Sacrament often? I'll tell you why....because the nonsense of Easter is powerful stuff. These same men who called the women silly for believing in the risen Lord, became martyrs, willing to die even in the most horrific ways, rather than give up their faith in the risen Lord Jesus.

But it did not happen immediately. We are in church this morning on this Easter Sunday singing hymns of joy. We believe our Savior lives. But the women went to the tomb on Easter Sunday still gripped by the darkness of Good Friday. Easter Sunday for the disciples was anything but a happy sunrise service. They were disbelieving, it says. Their whole life, and faith, and hope had come crashing down to the ground. And I, for one, am glad. Because we're not much different from them. And so the fact that they had doubts and fears, confusion, and plain old unbelief gives us hope. Think about it. Had the women and the Apostles embraced the Easter message without reservation--no doubts, no worries, no confusion--then why do we display all of these things? If everything in your life makes sense. If all your ducks are in a row, so to speak....you wake up each morning with Easter joy, you go to bed each night without guilt, you have a faith that has no doubts, no uncertainties, no confusion whatsoever, you live in peace with all people, your troubles never bother you, even temptations are never a problem for you...then I'm not sure who you are, but you're not human.

But if you, like the women on Easter morning, sometimes walk through life as if your God was dead. If you, like the disciples, at times display signs of unbelief--you get angry at your spouse, angry at your children or parents, angry at your pastor, you get angry at God because He doesn't seem to be answering your prayer. You believe God takes care of you, but still you worry. You believe Jesus died and rose again for you, but you still live with guilt. If you are anything like the women and the disciples on Easter morning, then thank God, because the nonsense of Easter will give meaning, and purpose, and hope to your life.

The world laughs at Christians who believe in a Jesus who died and rose again; a Jesus who claims to be, and who is, the only Savior for sinners; a Jesus who is present in Baptism and the Lord's Supper to give life and salvation through these Sacraments; a Jesus who loves the unlovable and forgives even the most despicable sinner. Jesus makes no sense to the world. Your faith in Him makes no sense. Your presence at His Communion Table makes no sense. Your Easter joy, even when your loved one dies in Christ, makes no sense. But "*the word of the cross,*" the Bible says, "*is foolishness, (nonsense), to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.*"

The person whose life makes perfect sense, who has it all figured out, who does not struggle with sin, and temptation, and guilt, who always rises above his troubles, does not need Easter, does not need a risen Lord, does not need a living Savior. And I hope this is not you, because if it is, you are here for the wrong reason. But if you are here this morning because, like the women and like the disciples, you need forgiveness, and comfort, and peace from God, and meaning and hope for your life, then the nonsense of Easter is for you. And it's for you not just today on Easter Sunday. It's for you every single week--every time your Lord comes here for you.

You do not have to be a Christian, on this Easter morning, who has perfect faith, a big smile within your heart, and few troubles in life. That's not who came out to the tomb on the first Easter. That's not who first heard the news of the resurrection. Easter's nonsense is for you who are sinners and you know it. It's for you who do not believe perfectly. It's for you who need Jesus, need His comfort, His love, His forgiveness.

And the good news has not changed in two thousand years. Jesus lives! Death could not hold Him, and neither can it hold you. Jesus lives! Your baptism into Him means everything. His life is given to you within those waters. Jesus lives! His Sacrament is no mere memorial meal. Your Lord is present here in bread and wine for you. Jesus lives! His word of absolution spoken by His pastor is no dead word. He does forgive your sins...all of them. He forgives you...all of you. Jesus lives! Your loved ones who lived and died in Him are in perfect joy, and you will join them in heaven even as you, too, remain in Christ. Jesus lives! And no matter what the world thinks, and says, and does; no matter how little sense this Easter nonsense makes, it is, He is the one Truth we can always cling to in life and in death. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.