

Easter 2021 – Come and see...go and tell

1. A very blessed Easter to each of you! He is risen!
 - a. Throughout this season of Lent, we have been working through a sermon series focused on God's call for His people to return to Him.
 - i. The theme came from the OT book of Joel, "**Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.**" (Joe 2:13)
 - ii. Throughout we've considered our own sinfulness and been reminded of God's call to return to Him; comforted by the promise that our God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.
 - iii. That is most clearly revealed in the resurrection.
 - iv. Today, it all comes together as Jesus is risen from the dead and invites His disciples to come and see Him and then go and tell the Good News.
 - b. It's a challenge every year to find something new, unique, different at Easter – something that will grab people and make them return for more
 - i. But maybe it's like the final verse in the old hymn that many of us know, "I love to tell the story," **And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.**
 - ii. That maybe we (pastors) become victims of our own creativity in trying to provide something dazzling to the Easter story.
 - iii. But the old, old story is still the best, why are we trying to dress up a story unique in all of human history?
 - c. A man three days in the tomb after dying by crucifixion comes back to life!
 - i. How do you make that narrative any more grand?
 - ii. And then when you put it together with WHY this all happened it becomes even more amazing.
 - iii. This man didn't suffer and die on a cross for any crime He had committed but He was doing it for someone else, He was doing it for you...for me...
2. He suffered and died on the cross for the wrongs that you've committed, every sin I've ever done, every sin of the whole world
 - a. Not a very cheery Easter celebration topic but it is that grim reality that makes our Easter joy possible.
 - i. As Paul reminds us in Romans, "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23).
 - ii. Our sinful nature clings to us we can't possibly strip it off of ourselves - we are trapped!
 - iii. We know this and ask: "Who then can be saved?"
 - b. Jesus replies: "**With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible**" (Matthew 19:26).

- i. God sent His own Son to deal with this problem. He has provided everything we need, as John tells us, **“God gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life”** (John 3:16).
 - ii. In Christ, your sin has been forgiven; your salvation has been secured.
 - iii. He has clothed us with His righteousness in baptism, **“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”** (Gal 3:27).
 3. He conquered sin, death and the grave for us, and His resurrection is the guarantee of our own resurrection!
 - a. And what does that mean for us, what will our future look like?
 - i. Look at our lesson from Isaiah, though written more than 2500 years ago the image is still fresh because it describes what people have always enjoyed – food and fellowship.
 - ii. Isaiah writes as he looks into the future to give us a picture of heaven, **On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.** (Isaiah 25:6)
 - iii. What are some of our most cherished memories, what is often lifted up in movies, holiday gatherings and feasts with great food and drink
 - iv. These are times that provide respite from the cares of daily life, from the reality of pain, we gather to lift each other up in support and joy
 - b. But at this final gathering, the Lord hasn’t provided a temporary respite from the trials of life but has provided a permanent refuge
 - i. He has in the words of Isaiah, **“swallow[ed] the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations”** (Isaiah 25:7).
 - ii. The Lord has taken away death and taken away the consequence of sin that would otherwise mean eternal separation from God.
 - iii. There is no grim reality to return to when the celebration is over (like in our world) because the celebration is the new eternal reality!
 - iv. So not only is the resurrection the greatest event in history that needs no embellishment, the purpose for which it happened, to open to us the heavenly high feast that knows no end, the greatest news of all time!
 - c. That Sunday morning, Jesus emerged from the tomb, resurrected from the dead, fully alive and the world was changed for all time by that news.
 - i. The angel said to the women who had come to the tomb to mourn their dead friend, **“I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay.”** (Mt 28:5-6)
 - ii. And then he gave them a purpose, he didn’t leave them to figure out what to do next, he said, **“Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen**

from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him.” (Mt 28:7)

4. “Come and see then go and tell,” that is the response to the Gospel, it isn’t a neutral word, when you come to KNOW the Good News you are compelled to bear witness.
 - a. This morning, He extends the same invitation to us: Come and see! Come and look at the One who was pierced but now is resurrected, salvation is complete!
 - i. Come and see what He has in store for you: your own resurrection!
 - ii. For the women at the tomb the invitation was come see where He was, for the disciples the invitation was, “Come to Galilee and you will see Him.”
 - iii. But we aren’t at the grave, we can’t go to Galilee, where do we see Jesus?
 - b. That why God gave us the Church. We come to this place because it is here that we see Jesus.
 - i. He promised that where, **“two or three are gathered in my Name there I am among them.”** (Mt 18:20)
 - ii. We see Him continuing to work in our world as He claim His own through Holy Baptism.
 - iii. We “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8) as we receive Christ’s own body and blood in and with the bread and wine.
 - c. And then what? It is no different for us than it was for the disciples: Come and see; go and tell.
 - i. That is the pattern that Jesus lays out for the Christian life: we trust, we wait, He acts, and we rejoice and share the news with others.
 - ii. So today, as you have now come and seen the salvation won for you by your Lord and Savior, may you be moved to go out into the world and to share with others what you have seen.