

Christ the Lord Episcopal Church Pinole, CA

The Second Sunday of Easter: April 16, 2023

The Resurrection

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Good morning and welcome to Christ the Lord Church on this second Sunday of Easter. And what a lovely Easter we had last Sunday. And so our Holy Week stories of last meals, betrayal, torture and death moves us to the revelation that Christ is Risen. We have a lot to take in, just as the disciples did.

I once heard a man explain that he had been a Christian all of his life, but he was unsure if he really believed in the resurrection until about a year ago, and this man was middle aged. He said the moment he realized that Jesus, the same one who was placed in the tomb, was really the same person who showed up to the disciples behind closed doors, he was never the same. He still participated in life, business, and family, but the material things didn't, in fact couldn't hold him. He had what I describe as experiencing resurrection energy, he had an inner wholeness and a joy.

That leads us to ponder about the reality of the resurrection. It seems you can be all in, or all out, or maybe a "I believe it on Sunday's" and feel you are in good company.

In fact, there are many scientists that believe and accept the resurrection story as real compared to some Christians - understanding that the more they know about the universe, the more they realize they know nothing but a speck of what reality is.

However, if you are looking into the resurrection of Jesus as something out of the ordinary, even for Jesus, I would like to challenge that. In scientific terms, when things grow and evolve, they go through processes, learning happens with trial and error and practice, and growth moves on to perfection. Why would this not be so for a spiritual journey, or for Jesus when all is considered?

Jesus begins his life in what some might consider different terms than most of us, but as an adult his miracle stories with transforming water into wine, warding off the devil's many different displays, feeding the crowds, raising Lazarus from the dead. The only thing left on the spiritual plane of growth would be resurrection. When looked at as a process, Jesus was just progressing to what for him came naturally.

Jesus' resurrection differed only in degree, not in kind, from Jesus' other miracles. They were all designed to prove that Spirit is All-powerful, and matter powerless, — that sin, disease and death sink into their native

nothingness in the thought of one who realizes that Life, Truth, and Love are the great facts of the universe.

The resurrection was the crowning demonstration, but it was so entirely in the line of Jesus' other mighty works, that it could be logically inferred. He had by the aid of Spirit met and mastered in an ascending scale, the devil of materiality; and when materiality assumed the form of death to him, it is easier to believe that he would be a victor rather than the victim. This view prevents the resurrection from being regarded as an isolated fact, making it a more logical understanding. Even if those who believe by faith alone are the truly blessed ones.

Jesus was asserting the fact that humans as children of God cannot die. He was demonstrating his birth-right as a son of God. He proved that the law of man's nature was Life, and that death was a false claimant.

He was claiming that the pure energy of Love is what God is created out of, and what Jesus was made of, and this energy of Love is also part of all of creation, and although processes in the natural world transform, our soul being, made of Love, contains life, both resurrect.

This energy of love created and demonstrated through the resurrection caused great change. Peter's cowardice, remember his denial, after the

resurrection was replaced by courage, his presumption by humility. John's fiery temper had so entirely disappeared that we think of him mainly as the embodiment of gentleness and love.

Philip does not ask to see the Father, for at last he has learned that he that has already seen the Son and therefore the Father. We also hear no more of Thomas' skepticism. As for Saul, who becomes Paul, the light of grace changed everything. All of these wonderful results the Apostles attributed in no small measure to the resurrection, and they confidently expected that the faithful preaching of their doctrine would produce a like transformation in the thoughts of their listeners.

The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead, and that if a man obeyed God here on earth, God would let him die physically, but would by some mysterious process make him alive again. Jesus proved that if a man obeyed God, that he could pass on up and out of this material plane and ascend to his rightful place in an eternal world.

Now as your priest, but more so as a hospice chaplain, I will attest that you will leave your physical body in the natural way, but I also believe the only thing you can take with you is the love you gave, and the love you created, not the things collected on this earth.

For some of you who have watched the movie *Everywhere, All at Once*, the thought of different planes of existence, or different frequencies, whatever language you choose, is a long standing belief in many cultures, and can be applied toward the resurrection. And know it is ok, not to understand, but to have faith.

Today in our Gospel Jesus clearly shows us that the scars of life, the price for our sins may remain, yet they no longer hold their sting in our relationship with God. The wounds are scars, but are healed, and as we learn, even touchable. And we can begin that healing our wounds and scars right here and now.

We can use that resurrection energy, the Easter tide and transform as the apostles did, to learn to live and walk in love as Jesus did, to have faith in the resurrection, knowing in our hearts that Jesus understands our suffering, and yet Jesus can help us rise above those sufferings, and that resurrection, that transformation, is truly the Gospel. Amen