

# Christ the Lord Episcopal Church Pinole, CA

Easter Sunday : April 17, 2022

“The Impossible is Possible”

Rev. Dr. Lois Williams

Happy Easter morning and welcome to Christ the Lord Church. I want to say a quick thank you for all those who have traveled this Holy Week with us either in person or by Facebook. Thank you to all those who contributed to make this an amazing celebration of God's love.

In today's scripture, in completion of our Lenten journey through the women's lectionary, we have the two Mary's and Salome as witness to the possibility that Jesus' body was either stolen, or as the young man dressed in white explained: Jesus is raised and will go ahead of them and meet them in Galilee.

Terror and amazement seized the women, they were dumbstruck and afraid. I totally get this. The previous week had been no walk in the park. They had shared in the joyous entry to Jerusalem with Jesus, they had shared a meal, they had watched him be judged, and then die on a cross. Their hopes had been dashed, they knew what was next. They would anoint the body, cry over his remains, pray to God, and then figure out their survival for the next few years. All their dreams and hopes gone. All their prayers, seemingly unanswered.

What they didn't know, was to expect the unexpected. They didn't know that God can and truly does make the impossible - possible. They had no words for what they were thinking; they had no imagination to put together a future story that included this experience.

So, I would like to back up a bit. I get it that we are here at the empty tomb; I get the scene of the scared women. I understand that the future for them and the world is now forever changed. But I want to talk a little bit about how we get to that place of accepting the impossible as possible.

We start at the beginning. It is the first day of the week, the sun had risen. We all know that feeling. That fresh, first of the week, have-to-get-things-done feeling. Well, we will also add that there is (and nobody likes to admit it) relief after a death. Not to say that whoever dies is needing to leave the earth quickly. But the whole end of life process, even with a sudden death, is a great shock to one's system. Once it starts to subside, there is a sort of strange relief. This is true of every ending, every death of sort. There is tension, there is upset, then there is relief. The relationship is finally over, the job is finally done, the move is finally made. Whatever the loss or change, we very often feel relief, but we can also lose our imagination to the positive possibilities.

The women in our story probably felt down, sad, but also relieved. They had witnessed the torture and at least now it was over, the tension gone. In their grief, they had a chore to do - to anoint the body of Jesus. So, as one grieves, keeping busy is one of the best forms of distraction. But then there is the question. Who will roll away the stone?

The last two years have been full of losses. Many of us have seen the death of family members; loss of jobs, opportunities, even our favorite restaurants may have bitten the dust and served their last. Our world continues to struggle as humanity fights with itself about how best to move forward in globally scary times. But the question still remains, who will roll away the stone?

“Who will roll away the stone” is equivalent to asking, who will make the impossible - possible. Maybe today is the first time you have decided to

participate in church, maybe after today you will want to return. Maybe this is the very week that you roll away whatever stone is keeping you from experiencing all that God has available for you in the universe. Maybe this is the very time in your life when God will make the impossible - possible. Take your God-given gifts and give you the opportunity to use them; maybe in ways you can't even imagine. We have a tendency to put obstacles in our own way. We can easily start a sentence or answer a question with, "I would if I could," or "yeah, that sounds good - but." And we all know in the back of our minds we would love to be part of whatever the situation is, however we feel it is impossible, a lost cause. Or maybe even think to ourselves we feel like a lost cause. Who is going to move the stone for you?

You can live a long or a short life; you can have money, or no; you can feel you are productive; or maybe you prefer the path of least resistance. What today tells us, in no uncertain terms, is to expect the unexpected. Jesus spent his life ministry explaining that love is the only measurement by which God operates, and we, in our limited human capacity, are unable to fully understand what we now refer to as "Holy mysteries". We are unable to wrap our heads around how much it is us, ourselves, keeping us down. It is us who give up on helping accomplish the always possible with God's help.

We are living a time in history where change is faster than we can imagine. Where the impossible becomes possible everyday! Why are we not shouting alleluia in the streets? Why are we focusing on the negative, expecting negative in return? Every year we are reminded that the stone has been rolled away; the tomb is empty. The possibilities are unmeasurable, the love is eternal and enduring. Maybe it is us, humanity, that is limiting those possibilities.

We can be resurrected this season. Life may not return to what we thought was normal. And in truth, it possibly wasn't that great. It was, after all is said and

done, just what we were used to. But the only constant is change, and we can either flow with the change and notice God in the equation, or we can block our own way by thwarting our imaginations and thereby leaving God's energy untapped.

If you have a stone blocking you from connecting to God, know that just as the women discovered, God has already removed it. God is not the one blocking the truth nor the love. God is clearly showing you the inside of the tomb - the very thing every human fears: loss and death. Yet the tomb is empty. The fears, the worries, are empty fears; not true worries, because according to the prophet Isaiah and also in Revelation, "Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken."

All that we suffer today, all that humanity has been through has been a blip in God's evolutionary plan to redeem our souls through his love. But the plan only works if we see that the obstacles have truly been removed. If the fear of eternal death has been removed, and everything on earth is transient, then everything we do to bring in love, is actually building the muscles of our soul. It is not the suffering that is God's purpose, it is strengthening the love we have for ourselves and each other that is God's purpose.

As Jesus has demonstrated to us, and as we celebrate today, the suffering is temporary. Death is temporary, loss is temporary, but the love and peace of the Lord is eternal. What we feel is impossible is indeed possible, if we only get out of our own way.

The impossible is possible, the Lord has Risen – *(the Lord has Risen indeed)*  
**Alleluia.**