

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

**Christ is Risen indeed, Alleluia!**

I always love to check and see how that works if I spring it on folks later in the service! Happy Easter! Easter and Christmas are, of course, the biggest holidays in our church year. And, because of that, because of their importance for our lives of faith, they are the stories we know the best.

This morning we hear the resurrection account from Jesus. It begins with Mary Magdalene going to the tomb by herself, presumably to anoint the body of Jesus. She gets the first of several shocks of her life when she sees that the stone blocking the entrance to the tomb has been moved and she gets Peter and another disciple to come look at it. After this little foot race between the disciples, it becomes clear that, not only was the tomb open, but that Jesus is gone, risen from the dead.

Peter and the other disciple head home, but Mary isn't ready to leave yet. I can only imagine the riot of emotions she must have been feeling. Terror that turned to amazement, all mixed with the deep grief she is surely still carrying...because even if Jesus has risen, he is not there, and she still misses her teacher and friend.

She gets asked twice why she is weeping, and I imagine, when it gets asked the second time, by someone she thinks is the gardener, she is a little frustrated—why wouldn't she be weeping? But in time she recognizes Jesus and carries his message back to the disciples: "I have seen the Lord!"

"I have seen the Lord!" This is the first post-resurrection testimony. She becomes the apostle to the apostles, sharing the Gospel, literally the "good news" that not only did Christ rise from the dead, but that he is currently physically present in the world. God's love carried through death and the depths of hell and is now all around them. And her response to that enduring love? Sharing what she has seen.

Sometimes, when we think about evangelism, we get nervous. We imagine something formal, or extravagant, or pre-planned. We imagine outgoing people with deeply emotional or miraculous stories talking about their experiences. We fear putting ourselves out there, just to be rejected. We worry what others might think of us.

But it can be a lot simpler than that.

"I have seen the Lord!"

Take a moment right now, and think about a time in the past week, past month, past year, whatever, when you have seen God. In an event, in an action, in a note from a friend, in worship, wherever! Think about it.

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Got it? Great!

Now, share it with someone around you. It can be someone in your family, if you prefer, just tell *someone*.

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How was that? You did great! I'm hoping it wasn't quite as scary as you may have thought it would be.

Now, I'm not saying that every person here needs to become an evangelist who stops people in the middle of Target so that they can share places they've seen God recently... I mean, if you want to, I'm not going to stop you! *But* I hope this exercise reminded you that evangelism can be as simple as a chat with a friend or a family member, even if they are already a person of faith.

Evangelism just means sharing the good news of God, and that good news is just as important for fellow Christians to hear from time to time as it is for someone else.

A little challenge as you go about your lives in the next week: what if, even just with your family or closest friends, you shared moments where you've seen God? How might it feel? How might it feel to hear *others'* accounts of those God sightings? Do you think you might become more tuned into them? That you might notice them happening more?

Because the resurrection means that Christ is alive: in our world, in our church, in our lives. Let's keep a lookout. And let's boldly say, "I have seen the Lord!"

Amen.