

Resurrection Is Happening!

Easter Sunday

Matthew 28:1-10
College Hill Presbyterian Church, Tulsa

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The story tells us that it happened early—while it was still dark. Before the sun rose, before clarity returned, before anyone could make sense of the chaos of the last few days—there was grief. There was the heaviness that settles into the body after loss. There was that quiet, aching question: *What now?* The women came to the tomb not expecting a miracle, but to tend to a body. They came carrying spices, not hope. They came to do what love does in the face of death—honor it, care for it, show up anyway. And that matters. Because Easter does not begin with certainty. It does not begin with trumpets or lilies or alleluias. It begins with heartbreak.

A progressive faith makes room for that. It does not rush us past grief. It does not demand that we silence our questions or tidy up our doubts. Instead, it invites us to stand with those women in the dim light of morning—honest about what has been lost, honest about what feels over, honest about how little we understand.

And then—something happens. The earth trembles. The stone is rolled away. The tomb is empty. But notice this: the stone is not rolled away so Jesus can get out. It is rolled away so they can see in. So they can see that what they assumed was final... is not. And from that moment on, everything changes—not because all their questions are answered, but because a new possibility has entered the story.

For many of us, the resurrection has been presented as something to prove or defend—a kind of litmus test for faith. *Do you believe this happened? Can you explain it? Can you make sense of it?* But **a progressive understanding of the resurrection invites a different set of questions. Not “How did this happen?” but “What does this mean?” and perhaps even more importantly, “Where is this happening now?” Because resurrection is not just about then. Resurrection is about now.**

Resurrection is not a single moment frozen in history. It is the ongoing, persistent work of God—bringing life out of death, again and again and again. We see it everywhere, if we know how to look. Resurrection happens when a person who has been crushed by life finds the strength to stand again. When a community that has been divided begins, slowly, painfully, to heal. When justice breaks through systems that have long been accepted as unchangeable. When compassion rises in a world that so often rewards indifference. Resurrection happens in hospital rooms, when healing comes—but also when it doesn't, and love remains anyway. It happens in movements for justice, when people refuse to accept that oppression is the final word. It happens in quiet, unseen acts of kindness that push back against despair.

Resurrection is not an escape from reality. It is a transformation of it. And it rarely looks the way we expect. The women leave the tomb afraid, yes—but also with great joy. Both at the same time. That's what real faith looks like. Not certainty without doubt, but courage in the presence of it. Not clarity without questions, but movement in the

midst of them. And as they go, they encounter the risen Christ—not in the tomb, not in the place of death—but on the road. That, too, is a clue. We experience resurrection as we move—into the world, into relationship, into risk, into love. We encounter the risen Christ not by clinging to what was, but by stepping into what is becoming. And that can be unsettling. Because resurrection disrupts us. It calls us out of the familiar. It loosens our grip on certainty. It invites us into a way of being that trusts life even when we cannot control it.

A progressive Easter does not insist that you have all the answers. It does not ask you to suspend your intellect or deny your questions. Instead, it honors the mystery. It says: maybe resurrection is not something to be explained, but something to be experienced. It asks: Where have you seen life emerge where you expected only endings? Where has love endured beyond what seemed survivable? Where has hope found you—even when you weren't looking for it? And if you struggle to answer those questions, that's okay too. Because **sometimes resurrection is not obvious.** Sometimes it is slow. Sometimes it is hidden beneath layers of grief and disappointment and waiting. Sometimes resurrection looks like simply getting out of bed when everything in you wants to stay buried under the weight of the world. Sometimes it looks like choosing to love again after your heart has been broken. Sometimes it looks like believing—just barely—that the story is not over.

Easter does not deny the reality of Good Friday. It does not erase the violence, the injustice, the suffering. The cross is still real. But **Easter proclaims that the cross is not the end of the story. That death does not get the final word. That despair is not the ultimate truth. That love—persistent, defiant, unyielding love—continues. And that is both a promise and a calling. Because resurrection is not just something God does for us. It is something God invites us to participate in. We are called to be people of resurrection.** People who roll away stones—stones of injustice, stones of exclusion, stones of fear. People who bear witness to life in places the world has written off as dead. People who choose hope—not as naive optimism, but as a courageous act of resistance.

To live as resurrection people is to believe that transformation is possible—even when the evidence is thin. It is to invest in love—even when it feels risky. It is to work for justice—even when progress is slow. It is to trust that God is still at work—still bringing life out of death in ways we may not yet see.

So this morning, you don't have to have it all figured out. You don't have to resolve every doubt or answer every question. You are simply invited to **come to the tomb.** To bring your grief. To bring your questions. To bring your longing—for healing, for justice, for new life. And to **look inside.** Not for proof. But for possibility. And then to **listen.** Listen for the voice that speaks, not from certainty, but from mystery: "He is not here." Which is another way of saying: Life cannot be contained. Love cannot be buried. God is not finished. Not with the world. Not with the church. Not with you.

Resurrection is not just something that happened. Resurrection is happening. Here. Now. Among us. Within us.

Alleluia. Amen.