Text: Luke 24:1-12

**Introduction**

Throughout Luke’s gospel he likes to pair people. And he often pairs men and women. Simeon and Anna at the start. Two saints that are looking for Kingdom and recognize the promised child Mary and Joseph have brought to the temple. The pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner and the woman who anoints his feet. The ruler of the Synagogue Jairus begging for his daughter, and the sick woman who skips the begging to touch the hem of his cloak and end up being called daughter. There are a bunch more pairings, not always male and female, but Luke loves the juxtaposition.

**Text**

And Easter morning is no different. You have the women as a group. Luke tells us at the end they were Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James, but at the start it is just “they.” The burial of Jesus ends with the notice that “the women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb.” It was “they” who “on the first day of the week, at early dawn, went to the tomb taking spices.”

And paired with these women is Peter. Peace be to the apostle John who tells his story of outrunning Peter. In Luke, it is Peter who “rose and ran to the tomb.”

And I think you have to conclude that each of these groups went for a different reason. And each of them saw something different.

Why did the women go to the tomb? They were bringing spices. They were to finished the burial. They were going to do what was required for their dead friend and rabbi.

And what they are confronted with this the gospel proclamation. First in merely physical terms. The stone was rolled away and they did not find the body. This perplexed them. Why would someone take a body of a crucified insurrectionist? Where might they have taken the body? But they were not given long to sit in perplexity before the revelation. Two angelic figures appear and ask them THE question. “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

Maybe some of us are here at Easter service for reasons like the women. We are seeking the dead. We want to give him his due. This Jesus gave us some nice stories. There are some wonderful songs. Easter morning has some of the best. Our friends are here. But we are still here about something dead. Performing the rites one more time seems good and right, but let’s not kid ourselves – it’s dead.

**The Women**

And if you have come to Easter morning for such reasons what the angels tell you is the Word. He is not here, but has risen. If you’ve come for the dead you won’t find it here. Here is the living. This is not the corpse of Christ, but the living body of Christ. This is just like he told you. All the way back in Galilee. All the way back in Sunday School. All the way back in a rocking chair with your mother and an Arch book. All the way back to the first time you heard it.

The son of man must be delivered and crucified…and on the third day rise.

He is risen. You didn’t understand then. Fine. It’s a tough thing, never having seen it before. The dead don’t rise. But now they do. The body you seek is not here. It is not cold on a stone slab. It is living. He is risen. Just like he told you.

“And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to…all the rest.”

These are the actions of the living body of Christ. We remember the words. We remember that God is faithful and keeps his promises. We remember that the living Christ is among us. And we tell others.

The Word of God awakens faith and changes our lives. Changes us from those who seek the dead, to those who know He lives. And because He lives, we too shall live. We too shall see God face to face.

Peter

Now the first proclamation of the gospel doesn’t always take. The women arrive back and tell their story to the apostles, and what happens? What do these sent ones who had been sent to proclaim the advent of the Kingdom do? “These words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.”

And now I going to make a distinction. Maybe they were just not desperate enough. Maybe they hadn’t hit bottom. Maybe the immensity of sin, just how low they could go hadn’t hit them yet. We know that Thomas rather quickly had gone back to work. He wasn’t’ there this day. Luke’s easter evening story finds two of them leaving Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus. As my favorite TV line of all time has it, “you’ll be amazed at how quickly it never happened.” You just go back to life. Put one foot in front of the other.

But when you are at the bottom. When you’ve betrayed your best friend…just like he told you you would. We he’s rebuked you for cutting off an ear. We the entirety of the past three years has come to nothing. Maybe you never even understood this rabbi who you confessed to be the Christ. When you have been weeping bitterly.

Maybe then that idle tale is not so idle. Maybe then you have to get up and check it out. “But Peter rose and ran to the tomb.”

Maybe then an idle tale is actually the beginning of hope. “stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves.”

Maybe if the dead do rise, this forgiveness can come to me. Maybe this pit I’m in is not so deep that God can’t pull me out.

“And He went home marveling at what had happened.” Maybe not maybe. It happened. He’s risen. And I don’t know exactly what that means for me just yet. But lets find out. It’s a new world. The dead rise.

**Eschatology.**

I don’t know where you find yourself on that scale. Looking for the dead to give all appropriate rites, or desperately trying to find any hope. Or maybe you’ve been drug here today and are more like those other apostles. Or maybe it is some complex mixture of all three.

But this is the Word proclaimed by the Angels. Exclaimed by the Mary’s and Joanna and the other women. Eventually preached by Peter and all those apostles. Wherever you find yourself, all of these testify to you today. He’s risen.

Death’s reign is over. Sin’s weapon is destroyed. That pale horse and his rider have been thrown into the see. That dread Pharoah can chase you no more. Because today the Kingdom of Heaven has come. The firstfruits of the new. The former things shall not be remembered.

Be glad and rejoice…forever.