

Easter Sunday—Sunday, April 21

Acts 10: 34-43

³⁴Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he

did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Psalm 146

¹Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

²I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

³Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.

⁴When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.

⁵Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God,

⁶who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;

⁷who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;
⁸the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.

⁹The Lord watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

¹⁰The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

¹⁹If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²²for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the

first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

John 20:1-18

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Questions:

Overall Lent Questions:

Before you read today, check yourself

1. How do you feel about Lent?/How are feeling about this Lenten season?
2. How do you feel walking with Jesus on his journey through this time of his suffering, betrayal, and death? How do you feel walking with those around you on your Lenten journey?
3. What do you want from Jesus this Lent? Be specific.
4. What do you think Jesus wants for/from you during Lent?

Entering the Text:

1. What word/phrase stands out to you?
2. What do these texts say about who God is?
3. What do these texts say about who we are?
4. What do these texts say about our relationship - or lack thereof - with God?
5. What good news do you hear?

Digging Deeper:

1. Acts, Peter tells the crowd that God “shows no partiality.” Yet, in the words of the hymn “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy,” which we sang this Lent: “but we make this love too narrow/by false limits of our own.” In what ways do you limit the love of God?
2. What was Mary feeling while she was weeping? What do you “weep” for?
3. Jesus asked Mary, “who are you looking for?” Now, imagine Jesus appearing to you, on the midst of your journey, asking you: Who, or what, are you searching after?
4. It seems as though Mary just can’t stand to leave her Lord. She makes the trip to the tomb twice. And she just can’t pull herself away to leave the tomb again. Then, once she sees and recognizes Jesus, she hangs on for dear life.
 - a. Why do you think Mary wants to hold on to Jesus? What leads you to hang onto Jesus?
 - b. What is it about her relationship with Jesus that brought her to this level of devotion? Commitment? Dependence? Intimacy?

Prayer of the Week

Lord Jesus, you have risen. Each year, we shout this acclamation, and yet, each year I keep hoping that the news of your resurrection will mean something more than it did last year; or maybe, that it would mean as much as it did sometime in the past when the promise of your life seemed more “real” to me. So this year, as I hear the news from the angels and as I see you appear to the women and to your disciples, reveal yourself to me, would you? Call me by name, and inflame my heart with a passion to follow after you. Give me the desire to chase after you so that I can be near to you, hanging on for dear life. Speak to me, and give me the courage to believe in you as my way, my truth, and my life this Easter season. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.