

IT'S OVER

Lent began 50 days ago. Each Sunday, during Lent, we have reviewed many aspects of Jesus' unique and astonishing life and message,... but it's over.

We can only imagine how the followers of Jesus must have felt when they got up this morning, 2,000 years ago. Likely they felt discouragement, despair and despondency – believing that all their hopes and dreams were over.

They probably were obsessing about their kind and loving deceased friend, and how,... in so many ways, he went against the normal unjust standards of society,..... and ...how he had such delightful wisdom.

He gave people hope, yet that hope conflicted with how things were controlled by those in power.

He promised so much, in spite of all the prevailing logic against such optimism. Jesus was a refreshing inspiration for the weak..... and...an irritant to those in control, , ...no wonder the leaders killed him.

It is not easy to go against the popular current of culture.

Every follower of Christmust feel that tension or should feel that tension.

When most of the people are looking out for their own interests, followers of Christ are looking out for what is best for others.

When large, corrupt corporations and greedy individuals exploit and pillage the land, the lovers of God's creation strive to be frugal and preserve the integrity of nature. It is frustrating to observe those destructive policies and behaviours supported by the general public—who only allow the pursuit of money to make the decisions.

It is not easy being a pacifist when our country is at war and when the military is glorified.

The frustration of being “different” can be overwhelming, and that tension can lead to anger , apathy or.... bitter insignificance – when we surrender our arms to the air and proclaim, “What's the use, the strong always win; the unjust constantly prevail; it's hopeless, ...what's the use.”

Have you ever felt that way? Have you ever felt that the odds were too great and what *should be* ...just won't happen,.... and that there's simply too little “real” justice.

It's like when your team deserves to win it all but, but at the end of the game,.... an extra man was not an extra helping hand,.... and the other team ends up with more points,.... and the hope for a championship just slips away.

It feels like everything is working against you, and you really don't have much choice,.... but to surrender.

Hopelessness – It can dim our view of all of life where we only see the dark, the dreary and what is wrong, dead and gone.

Disappointment and hopelessness is the “light of the world” – the great hope – extinguished.

Early in the morning, Mary Magdalene made her way to the tomb. She was going to anoint Jesus' dead body, not realizing that **it was** truly all over. She would soon discover that all that was *the old rules of order*— the established system was over. God was breaking into the human domain in a huge way. Creation was shaken to its very core; there was a Great earthquake, and an angel of God came from heaven and rolled away the stone in front of the tomb. The mighty Roman military guards standing watch lost all their power, and stood their helpless and petrified. Instead of a corpse, Mary discovered an empty tomb..... and the resurrected Christ.

This was new. Never had God intervened directly like this. This was a resurrection, not a restoration like that of Lazarus' return to life, and it was not working with nature as with the flood.

This was God in the world in a new way. **This was a resurrection.** Heaven and earth were united together.

Resurrection is coming back to life **in a new way**, a way that over comes deathto a new life that knows no end. **This was big, this was new.**

God changed the order of the universe: the unjust lost, the righteous prevailed. The evil, ruthless ways of the greedy, the tycoons and despots were defeated.

The resurrection was God's almighty **amen** to the life and message of Jesus. God was declaring that those who thought they had power, those who thought they could control destiny by using fear and death, were terribly mistaken....., and they lost.

God proclaimed for all and for all eternity that the way and message of Jesus was the **right** way / God's way,..... and divinely confirmed that The old rules were no more. The Resurrection ushered in a new age / a new way of life / an new order for the universe.

It's the end of the game, and the other team has more points, and they start to celebrate,..... but wait, you just discovered that you are playing golf,..... and the other team fades away.

The end / death no longer has its sting, because now we know there is more to life,.... in the present and for always.

This we know,.... and it is part of our Easter celebration – which is, there is life after death. There is hope. God is loving and just.

*However, it is counter to the life of Christ to be fatalistic and focus only on the here after.

Jesus was resurrected into the life of the living into our lives.

God comes to the living to bring life – A new life,.. a life of hope and optimism, and a life that knows there is a tomorrow, too.

Mary went looking for a corpse in a tomb, expecting the natural silent din of dread, but instead was confronted with the resurrected Christ, who, as John reported in his Gospel, asked Mary the provocative question, “**Whom are you looking for?**”

WHOM ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Are We looking for the past with old saviours from the closet of our youth / old dreams and expectations / old solutions to old rules and values? Whom / what are we looking for?

It's a new day.

The past / the old failed systems are as empty as the tomb!

It's over! The old way of thinking that might makes right is over.

The old way of striving after power / of accumulating wealth / of depending on money.....is over.

As Jesus demonstrated, we can be troubled and saddened by the pain, injustice and violence, YET.....still be in our culture: transforming corrupt, evil systems,... and ... we can be a part of God's healing, restorative love in the world.

We can be as Christ, ...and share in / be a part of God's redemptive activity,.....with the added awareness / the advantage that Jesus didn't have which is: we know that all that is evil **will not prevail.**

In fact the powers that are counter to God's way.... **lost.**

Redemption is happening,.... even though evil is still playing out its cards in a game that has long been over.

There is hope. In God's domain / in God's kingdom each day is a new day full of opportunities of wonder, grace, peace and love.

It's a new day!

For those who think their life has been wasted,

 To all those who believe that things should have been different,

 To everyone who has been beaten down and given up on life.

 To anyone who is filled with regret and shame.

It's over. Today is a new day.

God is gracious. God forgives all who repent. God empowers new life.

Go after your dreams.

Don't lament that you've never written that book; start today; **write it.**

Learn to play an instrument; make music!

Dance and sing out because time is irrelevant, and so it's not too late.

It's a new day. It's a good time to start living.
Discover the power of the resurrection.
There is hope, and there are new rules, and it starts now.

Recently, an old friend of mine, complained and moaned that he never had a daughter and that he always wanted one, and sadly said that it's too late to do anything about it.

I replied, "**No it's not.** It may be too late for you to naturally birth a daughter, **but so what**,..... adopt one. Adopt a friend's daughter by being an encouraging and supporting adult influence. Better yet, you can adopt my youngest, and you can start by putting money aside for her university expenses."

It's not too late.
The past is over, and today begins the new. It is all new.

Every day brings the opportunity to celebrate God's creation ...and the resurrection with God—when humanity and the divine are united.
Every day we can witness and be a part of God's redemptive love in the world.

We, the followers of Christ / believers in God's healing love, stand on our history and legacy,.... but we need not live in the past,... for we have a tomorrow which allows us to live today in a new and vibrant way.

Those who have not discovered the living love of God, breathe on borrowed time. For them, each breath is limited,.. therefore they think that they must grab and steal while they can, before it's too late.

Those who fail to grasp the resurrection, live a life of inadequacy and deficiency; a life that is full of fear.
That way thinking is the journey of darkness, greed and destruction.

Those who discover, as Mary did, the resurrected Christ **in life**, are free to livebecause time is not an issue and there is hope.

God is in humanity. There is a new reality. God's Spirit lives in each of us. We are resurrection people.

So, let the wind lift up your kite to the heavens.

Resurrection living is knowing that it is never too late. God is in the world through us.
The he old corrupt systems lost. Fear is in the past.

It's over.....just like this sermon.

New life begins now.