

Sermon: Perfect Love
Luke 24:5, 1John 4:16b-19

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Luke 24:5

The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them. "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

1John 4:16b-19

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us.

Sermon

You now those mornings where you wake up fifteen minutes before the alarm goes off, you jump out of bed immediately with a smile on your face and there is a happy song in your head and a bounce in your step. You now those mornings that you feel like a kid on Christmas mornings, alive and happy and eager to see what happy surprise is awaiting your day.

Today was not that day. Today was one of those mornings where the alarm went off and you wanted to throw it across the room. This morning was a morning where they curled up tighter under the covers and wished for just 10 more minutes, just a little more sleep. And even as the women awoke, they awoke to the reality of the nightmare of the past few days. Reality slowly kicked in that morning, the reality that the best hope for salvation and peace was now laid to rest in a tomb. The reality that they had witnessed their best friend and teacher hung on a cross until death, he was gone, death had its victory and now it seemed like they were just waken from a horrible dream. Had it been for nothing? Was it really over?

Mary and Joanna and Mary got up, someone had to go to the tomb. Someone had to finish the burial process by placing the spices and perfumes on the body. But every step of the way seemed to cause reality to sink in a bit more. They braced themselves for what was to come, steeled their hearts for having to face his lifeless body.

But then the unexpected happen, instead of a body they found the stone rolled away, instead of deathly silence they heard a voice, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen?"

It was Easter morning and the women suddenly had a flutter in their chest, a smile broke across their face and they turned and with each new step it sank in a little deeper. He is risen... He is Risen.... He Is Risen!!!

They went to tell the apostles all that they had heard and seen. They asked us, "Why do we look for the living among the dead? He is not hear?" Why do we look for the living among the dead?

Why do we look for life where there is no life? In dead presidents and empty titles? In short term highs or long term numbness that comes from drugs and drink, food and empty relationships? Why do we seek our joy where there can never be real joy? In making fun of our neighbors just to get a laugh. In dehumanizing and even hate people who are different than ourselves because it makes us feel like we are better than we are. Why do we look for love where there is no love, in silence and in abuse and self-righteous crusades of faith.

Where do we find love, where do we find life? It begins by finding the source of love and life. God is love... God is life. And perfect love, real life has no room for fear or want for punishment or retaliation. Perfect love, real life is made visible in a love that overcomes

hatred and fear, a life that overcomes death itself. Jesus is our one true example of this kind of love and life, and in him we can find perfect love and real life for ourselves.

Dr. David Bartlett says this about what Easter proclamation is about, "We tell The Easter Story, not for proof, but for Testimony. We testify what the church has testified from the beginning, the Lord Jesus Christ is always best described in the present tense. He lives; He reigns; he does battle against our deaths and against Death and all death's minions. And his rule, there will be no end. That's what we preach."

Death did not win, death will not win, but maybe most importantly - death does not win today. Because today Jesus is risen, today Jesus is Lord, today we awaken to perfect love that can never be lost, never be beaten, never be separated from us.

Awake and dance, awake and sing, awake and smile and skip and laugh and love and love and love for God first, last, and always loves us. Happy Easter! Amen