

Stumbling Upon Resurrection & Growing towards What we might Become | Thoughts for Easter
Mark 16:1-8 | Easter Sunday | Again & Again, the Sun Rises | April 4, 2021
Knox-Metropolitan United Church | Regina, SK | Treaty 4 Territory | Cameron Fraser

May We Grow Back

Not to What Was

But to What We Can Become

Some folks might remember this phrase from the art on our bulletin covers throughout the fall.

May We Grow Back

Not to What Was

But to What We Can Become

I've been pondering this as an Easter possibility.

A provocation of potential

An invitation

The finale of the Gospel of Mark, which we read this morning is kind of stark.

Both in its details, but also in terms of emotion.

The words of the text itself lacks the depth joy that is found in the other 3 Gospels.

In that way, perhaps it is the perfect reading for this year.

We, as the readers can bring the joy, beckoning forth the joy that is present.

It's available to us.

But it is also amendable to moments when our enthusiasm might be muted.

When perhaps our calendar says Easter Sunday but our bodies and our hearts feel like we need to dwell a bit longer Saturday before we are ready to pick up our cloths and spices and join the woman in their early morning mission.

The book of Mark, more so than Matthew, Luke, and John, has a lot of space for the reader to bring themselves into the text.

Many currently believe that the Gospel of Mark is best understood as a script for oral performance.

Awaiting the reader to pause, emphasize and emote.

There's a lack of closure in Mark's account that is perhaps disturbing

Or it can be strangely comforting.

Dr. Bill Richards who was our guest at coffee time last week speaking about breathing life into ancient texts named how Mark seems to invite or challenge the reader to embrace that lack of complete resolve, and to ourselves, continue the story...to use the words of the text go to whatever is our equivalent of Galilee and find the Risen Christ who has gone on ahead of us.

Perhaps we feel ready to run and see.

Perhaps we're still rubbing the sleep from eyes.

Lydia Wylie-Kellermann is the editor of Geez Magazine which was originally published in Winnipeg and just a few years ago moved its operations to Detroit when a new community of editorial staff was passed on the work of curating the magazine.

Earlier this week, appropriately for Easter, their Spring Edition arrived.

It's called Signs of Dawn.

In the opening Editorial, Kellermann reflects on coming to the Easter Scripture Readings a few months after the death of her beloved Mother whom Kellerman. They had made the decision, common amongst many cultures, but increasingly rare in our context (which is not that culturally dissimilar to Detroit, MI) to keep her body in their home for 2 days after her death, so that her family could wash and dress her themselves, and hold vigil in their own space.

Several months later as we approached Easter, scripture shapeshifted before my weary eyes. My heart clung to the women as they carried spices and travelled toward Jesus' tomb to anoint his body. Violated and brutalized on the cross, his body was now guarded by Roman soldiers. Yet, here came these women full of bravery, carrying grief and love, to honour his body and ritualize their mourning.

What I suddenly saw was that the women did not go looking for resurrection. They went with their eyes and hands open, walking right into the place of pain and violence. They went to touch death. And it was there that they stumbled upon resurrection.

At nineteen, I felt that call deep within me. Stay with my grief. Honour it. Walk towards it. And perhaps one day, out of this beautiful pain, I'd be surprised by new life.

Do I actually believe in the true reality of the resurrection? Did Jesus come back to life?

I don't know. Does it matter?

What I do know is that I would stake my life on it. I believe in mystery and wonder. I believe that systems of murder and oppression do not have the final word. I believe in life, in compost, in the seedling lingering under the snow. I believe in the provocative and dangerous power of resurrection. I believe that resurrection is something we practise with our lives. I believe it looks like justice. I believe it is born of struggle.

They stumbled upon resurrection.

They weren't looking for it

They weren't expecting it

But in being prepared to do the work of nurturing,

of tending,

of caring

In being prepared to touch the reality of what had occurred

They were unknowingly prepared to witness to that which would come next

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In her short, but powerful book *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, & Wild Possibilities*, activist and author Rebecca Solnit writes this...

"To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable. Anything could happen, and whether we act or not has everything to do with it...The future is dark, with a darkness as much of the womb as of the grave"

The future is dark, with a darkness as much of the womb as of the grave.

We do not know exactly what will happen —but that space of unknown is a space of possibility, out of which and into which we can act to bring about something.

The late Rachel Held-Evans suggests that the Easter narrative challenges us to recognize that showing up is the first requirement to witness the miraculous.

I think that resurrection is about the posture with which we embrace the present

And offer ourselves to the future

I mean that's what Richards suggests the Gospel of Mark is inviting
Here's the story

Now it's your turn

A few weeks ago, a video highlighting the Knox-Met Peace Garden premiered on our YouTube Channel and was posted to our website.

It's a celebration of the beauty of that space

But also, the dedication of those who tend to it

Who can look at the land at the time when others see dull browns and greys

And recognize the fertile possibilities

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In the dark of the early morning

The dark which was as much a womb of possibility as it was a tomb of finality

They came with spices in hand

To offer in love

In care

And in so doing

They stumbled on resurrection...

The Rev. M Barclay is the cofounder and director of enflashed, a nonprofit creating and facilitating resources of spiritual nourishment for liberation and other spiritual matters of living towards abundant life, structural justice, and collective joy.

They offer the following Easter prayer on their Liturgical resources page...

Keep your proclamations of grandeur.

Give me an easter as small as a seed.

One that can be planted while it's still cold outside.

One that can be watered with tears,
and demands time and patience to grow.

I don't need to know how large it will become,
how long until it blossoms,
or even if it will be pretty.

I only want it to grow roots that dig deep down,
striving for life in the underbelly of the world.

Spare me the cosmic promises of other-worldly escape
and point me to the Sacred possibilities within reach.

Tell me again about how the nutrients born from decay
keep even the saddest places brimming with potential for life.

May we grow back, not to what was, but to what we can become.

Easter blessings my friends

We are not Alone

Thanks be to God.