

## **Sermon Easter 4 21 19**

**See this stained glass window behind me? The more I look at it the more I like it. And I don't see it all the time, like you folks do, because I'm in front of it, facing out, most of the time. But every once in a while, I'm reacquainted with it. Every once in a while it surprises me. I'm not sure if it has an official name. I call it our Resurrection window. It is a fitting window for a Resurrection People. And that's who we are. We are Resurrection People.**

**There is Jesus, dressed as a first century Jewish high priest, just as the book of Hebrews refers to him — “our great High Priest.” There he is, bursting out of the tomb, breaking out of the tomb, out of that window and into our lives. And the look on his face says, “Let's go! Let's get on with it. Come with me.” Because from the moment our risen Jesus set foot outside the tomb, into the early morning sunlight, nothing was ever the same - nothing will ever be the same — resurrection!**

**Resurrection — Ohhhh, people have a tough time with that one. Not just lay people. Priests too! Lots of Christians do.**

**“It's just too fantastic! It's not realistic! I live in the 21st Century! I'm too sophisticated for these mythologies. But he was a nice guy, he set a good example, so I like coming to church. But the world I live in doesn't have room for miracles, for resurrection!**

**Coming back to life from death? Pah! COME! ON! I live in the real world!”**

**Oh do you?**

**Just think!**

**People deny miracles, deny the supposedly fantastic. Many miraculous events, many of those things that we might consider wondrous are just things we can't explain *yet*. Imagine pre-historic humans trying to comprehend flying. People flying was a miracle for a long time.**

**Think of the miraculous discoveries in medicine that we take for granted nowadays. Penicillin started out as a *mold!* And somehow that got figured out!**

**The average Roman or Jew or Greek of Jesus' day would be struck dumb at the notion of a vaccine.**

**But even more, think of things that are just plain wondrous and will always be beyond proof. Are you loved by someone? Isn't that a miracle? Face it. It probably is! The love of a child is a miracle. How does that happen? How do we find love, how do we find the ability to love in this world?**

**How did Jesus find his disciples and all the others that hung around with him? All except for one, and some believe his treachery was pre-ordained, they all went on to illustrious careers as missionaries. But they started out, each and every one of them, as**

**just average people, mostly illiterate, who became miracles of love and strength, miracles who helped with the miraculous spread of the church.**

**Did they all get along? Were they always buddies? Not hardly. The great brilliant Apostle Paul was so “great” that nobody ever went anywhere with him twice! Brilliant people can be very irritating. The Church grew, often in spite of its priests and leaders. The Church grew because, even in the face of silly splits and schisms, just enough of us always remembered that first principle, and we always return to it, thank God: God loves us — unconditionally — no exceptions.**

**Soooooo - resurrection? — piece ‘a cake.**

**We’ve all had resurrections in our lives. From a surprisingly great report card, (that kid finally got it!) to a pet that got sick and yet lived, to someone who faced a difficult disease and yet came through, to a near miss car accident - to a hard time at work and then prayer and patience paid off — to a fight with a friend and you both just mutually and miraculously decided to step back and take a second look at your friendship, to consciously value it and save it, or to graciously, with love mind you, let it go.**

**To forgiveness. Forgiveness is a creative force. Forgiveness is rebirth, a resurrection. Forgiveness is a miracle.**

**Maybe you are part of a friendship that has grown and changed and matured like a fine wine. Maybe you have a love that is maturing like that friendship. Don't you value it? That too is a miracle and a resurrection.**

**Maybe somebody just hates your guts - and you don't know why. It can happen. What're you going to do about it? Pray - pray - pray. The answer will come. And maybe you're supposed to do nothing and just give it time and patience.**

**Finding joy in even the most difficult situations. Finding hope in even the most difficult situations. Those are all resurrections. And they are all within our reach.**

**And never forget, death is necessary for resurrection. That could be the death of anger, the death of sorrow — maybe just resolving to let go of whatever is holding you back. That is what resurrection is about. It isn't about *new* life. It's about *returning* to life — with more life — with greater life.**

**Death is necessary for resurrection.**

**It is in the very nature of creation to renew — to resurrect. All of nature, all of God's creation teaches us that. Trees have to die for trees to grow. Entire forests have to burn ... on a regular basis.**

**And whatever we do, we cannot take resurrection for granted. See those two guys up there? They are really why I love this window. They're sleeping through it! They're sleeping through the**

**miracle! They're missing it! It doesn't get much more ridiculous than that!**

**I don't ever want to hear from anybody, "Oh miracles don't happen for me. I'm not gonna have any resurrections." Maybe you're not paying attention! Maybe you're a stick-in-the-mud realist and you don't make room for miracles. Don't fall into that trap. Don't insist on so-called reality. Go with the *really* real - the mind-blowing. Go with the possibilities - that's where *real* reality is.**

**There is an ancient Chinese philosopher who once said, "When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be."**

**Whew! Think of all the possibilities there!**

**If only for a moment. Accept the miracle. If only for a moment. Accept the gift of the miracle of Jesus Christ, alive and real today. Living for you. Loving you. If only for a moment. Even if you can't quite grasp it, give the unbelievable a moment. With practice, you'll be able to accept the miracle — more and more. Maybe, just maybe, you'll be able to live with it - really live.**

**Alleluia! Jesus Christ is risen TODAY!**