

**Scripture Reading: John 20:1-10**

**“1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." 3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.”**

## **'The Marveling of Peter'**

I think this might be a first in our series, but we are only going to deal with just one verse from Luke's Gospel this morning... A verse that I believe refers to events which John's Gospel gives in more detail, which we just read. We have before us an account from John and a verse from Luke that can truly help us understand what Jesus meant when He often said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” Luke says only this in his account,

- **“12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.”**

We are going to take some time to consider what Peter marveled about that morning, what happened to Peter later that day, how his faith matured and what all this means for us in our Christian walk today. We need to remember that when Jesus says, “he who has ears, let him hear” He is not just talking about sound waves & a functioning ear!

- **He is talking about someone responding to the gift of faith that has been given by the Holy Spirit**
- **He is talking about someone coming to a full understanding of not just words, but truly believing events that have taken place around them or in history... Like the resurrection!**

The simple phrase ‘he who has ears let him hear’ appears literally in the Gospels eight times, along with many other similar references. The most powerful comes at the end of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus draws a chilling comparison:

**Matthew 7:24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."**

As we referenced quickly last week, we have in the Resurrection accounts...

- **Those who believe and are empowered to serve Jesus**
- **And we have those who are who are hardened in their unbelief and go on to face the destruction that Jesus foretold.**

Over the next three weeks we will see Peter, then two other disciples and finally all of the Apostles and all the followers of Jesus come to believe that Jesus has risen from the dead...

- They will HEAR this message with ears of faith that will bring real changes in their lives

We must also remember those Roman soldiers who witnessed the Resurrection and the religious leaders who paid them bribes to lie about what happened...

- They did not have ears to hear, even the news of such a glorious event like the resurrection

In the coming years and centuries Jerusalem & Rome would undergo many storms & winds & rains... The City of Jerusalem would be utterly destroyed in AD 70. Rome would also see famines, plagues civil unrest with wars and civil wars: They would fall to the barbarians...

- As Jesus said, the fall of their houses would be great

- They had rejected the rock cut without hands

On the other hand the Apostles and followers of Jesus would also face many storms, winds and rain... They would be persecuted by the Jews and tortured and killed by the thousands or tens of thousands at the hands of the Roman Caesars.

- And yet, their house, the Church, the Bride of Jesus would stand because it was built upon the rock of their confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God!
- So let's step back and see the progression that takes place in the life of Peter & learn how we are to respond to what God teaches us!

Thursday night, Jesus had told Peter that Satan desired to sift him, but Jesus said that He Himself would be praying for Peter...

Peter had not heeded these words, but I am sure they came back to him as he left the empty tomb pondering what had happened.

On Friday Peter had been whipped in both directions as he tried in his flesh to keep his promise to follow Jesus ANYWHERE, even unto death

Peter was rebuked by Jesus for attacking the Chief Priest's servant with his sword, not understanding that the events that were unfolding were taking place in the foreordained providence of God!

Peter then fell off the cliff on the other side of the road, by denying that he even knew Jesus...

Not once, not twice but three times...

- Just as Jesus had foretold.

Denials that came with cursing and swearing to prove his point...

- Denials that cut Peter to the heart when he heard the cock crow and saw that look from Jesus.

All of the disciples had scattered in fear, including Peter who was always ready to lead, and was now leading in the wrong direction.

Calvin goes so far as to say that the fall of the Disciples was so severe that God temporarily anointed the faithful women who had followed and served Jesus with the Apostolic mantle, using them as the witnesses and proclaimers of the Good News:

- Jesus had risen from the dead!

**This is what we studied last week and how Luke begins his account of this important day... It is the women who go to the tomb, come to believe and proclaim it to the disciples. Then Luke makes his brief reference to what happened to Peter...**

- **I believe it is brief because Luke knows that Peter will play a very important role in the rest of the orderly account which he will provide to his friend Theophilus in the Book of Acts**

**It is also Luke who reveals a bit later that Jesus appeared to Peter this day before coming to all the Disciples. So let's look at what John reveals about the events of that morning...**

**-- We know that Mary Magdalene went with the other women to the tomb early on Easter morning...**

**-- John tells us that she rushed back to report to Peter and John that "they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him!"**

**-- Peter rushes out to go to the tomb and John follows him.**

**-- However, John, I suspect being a little younger outruns Peter and arrived first at the tomb**

**-- John looks in and sees the linen cloths and no body, confirming what Mary had seen and reported.**

**-- Peter arrives and rushes past John to enter the tomb...**

**-- It is here where Peter begins to hear with ears of faith...**

- **Luke tells us very specifically what Peter saw...**

- **What Peter would begin to ponder and marvel at!**

**Peter "saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself." This was NOT the work of common grave robbers who would not have unwrapped the body to be stolen. It is not even what followers of Jesus would have done if they really had stolen the body as the soldiers reported. It is certainly NOT what the religious leaders would have done who had control over the grave.**

- **It was, and is, more solid evidence that Jesus had risen from the dead!**

**John now enters the tomb and we are told that "he saw and believed."**

**This was not a mature faith because John adds in HIS OWN account, "For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead." What Peter & John see has confirmed the report that Mary brought that the tomb is empty...**

- **But they now can clearly see that what happened was certainly NOT the result of someone stealing the body.**

**John then tells us "the disciples went away again to their own homes."**

- **It is Luke that tells us that Peter "departed, marveling to himself at what had happened."**

**Now I would love to finish this sermon by reviewing all the details of the climax of this morning for Peter...**

- **How Jesus came to him individually as He did with Mary**
- **Where the encounter took place**
- **The first words that Jesus spoke to the one who had denied Him three times**
- **How Peter reacted to all this...**

**Alas I cannot, because here we have one of those places that convinces me that the Bible's author is divine! There are NO details! The Bible simply cannot be something put together by men...**

- **Any human attempt to tell this story, or even human interference to change things in the Bible down through the centuries would have included more details of this visit by Jesus to Peter!**

**Why are we given no details?**

- **The Bible is silent and it is something that we need not spend a lot of time speculating about why that is so!**
- **What we ARE told is that Peter went away from the tomb marveling at what he saw.**

**I am sure that Peter replayed the events of the past week over and over in his mind, including the fact that Jesus said He would pray for him.**

- **We then know that Peter meets the risen Jesus, his struggling faith is confirmed!**

**Jesus did NOT appear to those who hardened their hearts against Him**

**Jesus appeared to those who were given the gift of faith and would come to know the risen Savior and the power of His resurrection!**

**This risen Savior appears to Peter, the one who denied Jesus three times with curses on the night of His trials.**

**The one who fled and hid during His suffering and crucifixion**

**The one who was still hiding on the morning of the resurrection!**

**But our merciful Savior brought Peter to that empty tomb to see the grave cloths**

- **Our merciful Savior met Peter somewhere along the way as he marveled about all that happened.**
- **Our merciful Savior even met Peter on the Sea of Galilee after Peter returned to his roots in frustration, fishing vainly all night**
- **Our merciful Savior there comforted Peter explaining how he would die defending the faith**

**And finally our merciful Savior sent the promised Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost who filled all the Saints with power to proclaim the truth and take the Kingdom of Jesus to the four corners of the world.**

**Such was the end of the marveling of Peter:**

- **His faith was confirmed**
- **His marching orders given at the Great Commission**
- **His faithful boldness brought by the Spirit**
- **His story told in the pages of Acts**

**We will learn much more about Peter's faith and life as we study that book, but for this morning I want us to see the important lesson that this single verse in Luke's Gospel has to teach us:**

- **We too are to consider what God has done, like Peter did with the empty tomb and grave clothes**

We too are to marvel at what we are shown or told... Remembering the lesson of Thomas where Jesus said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

In a few weeks we will see Jesus rebuke the Disciples for not believing the testimony of those who saw Jesus

- That rebuke applies today to any who refuse to hear those same witnesses and many more!
- We are to hear, to marvel and to believe

This is what Jesus meant when He said, "He who has ears, let him hear!"

- Hearing with ears of faith, marveling with a mind of faith and believing with a heart of faith.
- This was the journey of Peter and it must be our journey as well.

I want us to consider some examples and how important our faith is in these areas, but first allow me to share a story that stuck with me as a young Christian...

It is based on true events in the life of Charles Blondin, a famous tightrope walker performing in the late 1800's [Tell the story...] I do have a picture to show the kids at lunch

So what does this mean to our Christian walk...

There are many things that God tells us to believe... REALLY believe

- We are to believe this Book is God breathed... His revelation to us!
- On the VERY first page we are told to believe that God made EVERYTHING that exists in six 24 hour days!
- We are told to believe the evil of this world, including death, has been caused by the actions of one man
- We are told to believe that God sent His own Son through a virgin birth to solve this problem of sin
- We are to believe that Jesus gave His life to pay the price for our sins and was resurrected in power, just as Peter and the other disciples came to believe
- We are to believe that the Kingdom of Jesus is to fill the whole earth, discipling the nations and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit
- We are to believe that Jesus is coming again to judge the world and defeat the final enemy, death!

OK, all things you have heard many times here at Church of the King and in many other orthodox churches... BUT do we hear Jesus saying, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear."

I have spoken these great truths this morning... The sound waves have carried them to your ears and your nerves have taken them to your brain.

- Now the question is, do you hear them with a heart of faith?
- Do we marvel at what the Bible teaches, ponder what has been proclaimed, and then say to Jesus I am ready to have you carry me through the storms of life

I want to give brief examples for each of these great truths I have mentioned to see their importance in our lives, but will focus on the resurrection...

- I do so because it is in our text this morning and it has been the center of the trials that the Stoos and Warren families have faced this past nine days...

**Our grandson Kenny was killed in an auto accident recently and we held his memorial service on this past Tuesday**

**As part of that service I turned to the account of the raising of Lazarus to comfort those grieving...  
Reminding them that Jesus wept!**

**But this morning I also want to mention Mary & Martha, who said they believed that Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead, but could not believe He would do so in their presence.**

- **They had the intellectual understanding but NOT enough faith to bring the comfort they needed that day**

**Now Jesus was merciful and raised Lazarus anyway and I can assure you He often does the same for us! The man who witnessed to Kenny and brought him to the Lord two weeks ago spoke at the service and shared this testimony. Based on that account, we know where Kenny is today...**

- **But do we really believe it?**
- **Do we have doubts?**
- **Do we just HOPE it is true?**
- **Is it something we just cling to make us feel better in our grief?**

**If we are honest, we all have to say all of these question trouble us a little, but we must cry with the young father whose son was possessed, "Jesus, I believe, help my unbelief!"**

- **This cry should always be on our lips because our entire lives are filled great truths which we must hear, marvel at, ponder and believe!**

**I would admonish all of you, and especially you who are younger, to do so SOON...**

**You do not want to wait until the winds have arrived and the rain is pouring down to decide that you better check and see if your house is really built on a rock foundation It is easy to say we believe all those great doctrines, quietly, not making any unnecessary waves, but that kind of faith will NOT get you through the tough times with the comfort you need"**

**-- When a natural disaster strikes...**

**That is not the time to begin pondering whether you believe God is in control of all things...**

**And IF you thought the creation account was not that important, thinking to yourself, who cares where man came from and when...**

- **Then you will struggle to believe that God is in control or to understand an event where perhaps thousands lose their lives!**

**-- When the next school shooting takes place...**

**That is not the time to begin pondering whether you believe in the fall of man into sin...**

**And IF you thought Adam and Eve were just make-believe or part of evolution...**

**Then you will have no basis to believe in real sin and you will not be able to explain the evil that took place causing children to die.**

**-- When you face a death in your family or that of close friends...**

**That is not the time to begin to ponder what happens to people after they die...**

**And IF you thought the virgin birth of Jesus and His death, burial and resurrection were more or less the same as Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny...**

**Then you are not going to find any real comfort when you need it the most in a time of loss.**

**Christians can know real joy in the midst of real grief because we KNOW that death is part of the fall and that Jesus has won the victory over death.**

**Pastor Tuuri of our sponsoring church in Oregon City wrote these comforting words to my daughter in her time of grief that reflect the truth of what we know will take place: "A young caterpillar will fly with you at the resurrection. I am so thankful for the assurance you were given today... The cocoon will hold in our Father's care till then."**

**-- As we studied at length last week, if you do not believe the Kingdom of Jesus is going to fill the earth, the mundane tasks of life will get you down and you will likely find yourself VERY depressed.**

**-- And finally if you face the death of someone who has not made a clear profession of death...**

**That is not the time to decide if you believe that Jesus will return to be the just judge of all things.**

**Then you will be in great agony not understanding what has happened to the one you have lost to death**

**On another personal note, I also lost my own brother to an sudden accident at a young age...**

**Jim was hardened against the Gospel and made no profession of faith that we know of...**

- **Yet we can have hope: Linda and I had shared the Gospel with Jim, we had given him a Bible and encouraged him to believe**

**We will certainly rejoice if we see Jim in heaven, but I also know that if he is not there, I will be their with my loving and just Savior who knows why he is not.**

**Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is going to teach us these lessons...**

- **We can learn them the easy way or the hard way.**
- **We can ponder and marvel at the truths God has revealed and our faith will bring us great comfort when the storms come**

**Or we can wait and let God use those storms to teach us those lessons in the midst of much sorrow and grief: Jesus calls us to the better way... Jesus says to His people:**

**"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

**For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."**

- **Come to Jesus & marvel at the glory & power of His Resurrection!**

Communion Meditation: Psalm 23:

**"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

**5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.**

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever."**