

### Pastor Roy's sermon from April 12, 2015 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter)

The 7 week season of Easter is a celebration of resurrection which was first experienced by Jesus' followers. John refers to Christ and resurrection as a word of life--eternal life, part of God, with God, and coming from God. Life is wrapped up in God. John sees God in the light. . .and fellowship in this life with God and with all of our sisters and brothers.

How did Jesus' friends experience resurrection? Jesus was alive. But he was no longer permanently living with them as he had in the past. He wouldn't be announcing plans and journeys as he had before. They had to live the rest of their lives without him right there. No longer a physical presence. His guidance, encouragement, inspiration, and connection to God. Now they had to make their own decisions and decide which paths to take and how to teach and lead and love.

Christ's resurrection means that he is still alive. His message, the Gospel, is still important and he is present for us as to his followers. Yet his presence is much like that of the presence of loved ones who have departed in that we keenly sense their presence but they are not present as they had been. It is a matter of faith. It is a matter of creativity and imagination. Not the kind of imagination that pictures pure fantasy. No, this creative imagination gives form to realities which are just beyond what we touch, and see, and hear. These are forms of Spirit, Life, Hope, Faith, Love.

Resurrection frees us from fear because nothing can separate us from Jesus' quality of life, this enduring life of God. Again, I am not speaking of resurrection as an eating, breathing life full of limitations, but life which finds the connections and interdependence between all that live. This is a life of freedom. This is the life of memory. Insight. Openness. A listening, attentive spirit. This is life which asks questions without demanding certain answers or even clear answers at all.

Resurrection life, the word of life, is open to all but it flows from God. So no one is excluded from this life of eternal freedom. We may exclude, but God welcomes. And so we cannot limit the life of God. We participate in the life of God, and it sets us free. Our openness to listen will determine our level of engagement. We live in the energy of resurrection all around us. It fills us with hope, and life, and peace. Spirit is awareness of resurrection and seeking it daily.

So resurrection is seeing Christ today with eyes of faith. It is openness to the faithful life of love. So I believe it is less important what you believe happened at the tomb, or with Thomas and the other disciples and much more important how you see Christ acting around you today. It is more important that we see life and love at work all around us. This life and love give us fellowship with all of life, human and otherwise. It gives us a foundation, a source of community, a unity of purpose. So resurrection is not about 2000 years ago, it is about today. What will you do with it today?

[How do you experience and seek resurrection? Take a couple breaths. How do you see God acting in life and love around you? ...The saints have often referred to watching with Christ. What does that mean? Does it not mean living our lives with our eyes open for God? Does it not mean living our lives in the mystical presence of God? Realizing, "Oh, this is really not about me. This is about God acting in this time and place. . .and I am just watching. Observing. Offering a nudge, a word, a simple action. Our Risen Christ is acting within us, through us, sometimes around us or in spite of us, but always acting. Always present. Always hope and love.]

In terms of loved ones who have died. . . In terms of other losses and changes in our lives. . .In terms of aging. . .In terms of national, global, local politics and conflicts. . .In terms of economic trouble. . .