

Pastor Roy's Sermon from April 23, 2017 (Easter 2)

What does it mean when we say, "He is alive! He is Risen!?" How important is the resurrection to our faith? Is it simply a detail of our faith?

When we read the New Testament we see that the faith of the early church began with the person of Jesus. He lived. He loved, taught about love, and compassion for the least. He healed. He died. He rose up into the life of eternity. In everything, he led the way.

What made their faith different and relevant was that they proclaimed him to be alive. The early church's message of Jesus was fused with his resurrection. You can't have one without the other. His message mattered because it was death proof. Death could not destroy the life he proclaimed—the life he demonstrated—nor the life of his followers. The message of reconciliation and communion, healing of relationships all inseparable from life without end.

So for the early church *and* for us, it's not enough to choose Jesus, much like we might choose an airline or car, or favorite restaurant as the one who will see us through our lives and into eternity. Faith in Christ is about being on the way with Jesus. Now follow me here, I'm not talking about the power of imagination to picture Jesus in this room with us. Faith is not just me and Jesus against the world. Faith in the living Christ is about joining with him in loving and being loved in all of our relationships. Faith is about being truly alive with Christ.

Faith in the living Christ is about tapping into his life and love which never ends. It's living with Christ who lives in and around us.

Walking with Jesus is about living into his message of communion and reconciliation in all of our relationships. Simple allegiance to Jesus is about "What's in it for me?" Walking with the risen Lord is much more: it's about being part of something bigger, greater than just me and those closest to me. Communion, reconciliation, and healing along the way. . .each day.

What about the disciples? What can we learn from the disciples? They were on the way with Jesus but more often than not they misunderstood Jesus. They clung to their fears, doubts, and insecurities. They failed. But they kept walking with Jesus. They kept following.

The resurrection seems to have been their "Aha!" moment. They got it, a few stayed in Jerusalem, but then they scattered to the wind, taking the message of the living, loving Jesus with them. Thomas confesses, "My Lord and my God!" In the next chapter, Peter confesses when the risen Lord asks him if he loves him, "You know everything, you know that I love you!" Each time he asks and Peter responds, Jesus invites him, "Feed my sheep!"

We are reminded this Easter season of the essence of our living faith, communing with our living Lord who invites us to live in love. Who invites us to be truly alive. Amen.