



CHRIST CHURCH CRANBROOK

Broken Bodies Rise Easter Sunday 442021

I speak today as a sinner to sinners, as the beloved of God to God's beloved, as one called to bear witness to those called to bear witness. Amen.

As I was thinking about what to say this Easter day, I was mulling over the message. And I was, as I usually am on Facebook, kind of keeping things going in terms of the social media of the church in my life and connecting with my friends, and up comes a poem, a kind of poetic prayer that I wrote and posted right about this time last year.

And the title of the poem and the prayer is this: Broken Bodies Rise. And this is the poem:

God is with us
Our Lord has not forsaken or forgotten us
Yes, we are living in an unprecedented time
Yes, the next few months will be extraordinarily challenging
Yes, we will learn to find God in moments of profound silence and solitude
Yes, we will learn to feel God through different forms of connection and community
Yes, we will have to learn new ways to be the church
Through it all, we will find a way to trust in a risen Jesus and depend upon His word
In it all, we will have to listen for the Holy Spirit's presence in us and between us
We will adapt to these new realities because God is the ground of all reality
We will live through this time because God is the Creator and Redeemer of time
We will live through whatever happens because Christ has defeated sin, death, and the grave

Our Lent is ending soon
Easter is coming whether we hear brass and timpani or not
We will discover new gifts and hear new music
That is how resurrection works
Awkwardly, our bodies will adjust to new rhythms
That is what resurrection looks like
God will surprise us with grace we did not know we had
That is what resurrection feels like
God will comfort us as we let go of things we have come to love

Because we now live as if death were not
God will reveal to us as if for the first time what it means to worship a living God
Because Christ lives in us

And as soon as I re-read that poem, that prayer that I wrote in 2020, with all that has happened since we had shut down and all that we have learned about ourselves as a church. And all that we have had to struggle through as a nation and all the ways in which we have had to reinvent ourselves as a community, the question that came to my mind, and the question I ask you today is did Easter come in 2020? Did we know the resurrection in the midst of this pandemic? In what ways were we witnesses to the resurrection?

Like the witnesses we meet in our readings for today, where Peter says to the people of Jerusalem, that he is a witness to Christ's resurrection. Or where Paul says to the community in Corinth that he is a witness to the resurrected Christ. Or the women who leave the tomb afraid because they had been told by witnesses that Jesus had been raised. What are the witnesses to resurrection that you have provided? Who has been a witness to you? In what ways has this prayer, this poem, this learning to be a new church, this learning to worship Christ in different ways, this learning to be together. In what ways has it come true to you?

And this is a question that is an invitation, because I don't think that I can convey to you the power of resurrection and the life that Jesus gives to us without your participation, without your willingness to enter into this thoughtful, prayer and meditation, to think for yourself on all that has happened in your life. And to see that the resurrection has truly been around you. Because, thanks be to God, when Christ rose from the dead, He rescued and redeemed all of creation. And this means that the resurrection is not merely a moment in time, but the resurrection is the lens through which we see the fullness of time, the meaning of life. The resurrection is the truth that you and I are invited to inhabit.

And so as we have gone through this past year where our experiences have varied, where our emotions have been incredibly rich with incredible highs and incredible lows. The challenge of seeing that resurrection, of believing that resurrection, it lies with each of us. Each of us is called to be a witness to the resurrection. Each of us is called to move our bodies awkwardly to the music of God. Each of us is called to feel out where we find God in our own midst. This is not work anyone can do for you. It's work that God is doing in your life. And the task for us today is to open our eyes and open our hearts so that we might see it.

In today's gospel from Mark, there is a question that the women ask and it's the most natural, normal, sensible question anybody could ask, which is when they're going to anoint the body of Jesus and they have made painstaking preparations to make sure that the body is washed and preserved, according to their custom and law. They asked the question, who will roll away the stone? Who will help them let Jesus out of the grave? Who will help them get into the

grave so they can wash Jesus' body? And when they get there, they discover the stone has already been rolled away. God rolled away the stone. And they went in and they were amazed and terrified because something new and surprising was happening in their midst.

So as you go through this Easter day, as you begin to celebrate with us a kind of gradual return to normalcy, as you begin to experience again, what it's like to be with each other in small ways, even just through visually seeing these flowers, or maybe hearing the brass, or maybe being with us in person when it feels safe for you, the challenge will be for you to let God roll away the stone of your lives.

Easter is a time, particularly when it's done in the midst of adversity, particularly when it's done in a time in which we know longing so well, particularly in a time in which we know loneliness so well, particularly in a time in which we know insecurity so well, Easter is a time in which we remember the imperative and obligation to celebrate. Because when we celebrate, we attend to something, we open our eyes to what is hidden in plain sight and we begin to look for redemption and things that are beautiful, good, and true. And today we are called to celebrate the resurrection.

Rabbi Joshua Heschel said in one of his writings that he published in 1965, that "celebration is not entertainment. We engage in entertainment to be distracted. Celebration means that we have to focus our attention on things that are greater than ourselves and find the greater joy and participate," he writes, "in an internal drama."

May this Easter, may this day of resurrection be a time of celebration for you. May you hear the music of God, no matter where it comes from, no matter who sings it. May you learn the new rhythms of redemption in your life. May you find what you are seeking for. May you be surrounded by loved ones near and far, living and dead, for Christ is with us and in us and through us. Thanks be to God.

Amen.