

Wild Whispers of Faith
A Message for Easter Sunday 2013

The Rev. Paul Alcorn
Bedford Presbyterian Church
Bedford, NY
March 31, 2013

After at least a week of extensive and exhaustive research, I have come to what might be, for some, a troubling conclusion. Despite what appears to be a trend to the contrary, and an enormous amount of money invested to influence public opinion, Easter is not primarily about...

Easter bunnies.

Or Easter eggs.

Or Easter baskets.

Or candy.

It is also not about Easter bonnets.

Or butterflies.

Or spring.

Or flowers.

It is not even about the Easter parade.

But, truth be told...

All that is easy and easy to understand and easy to explain and, therefore, easy to celebrate.

On the other hand, resurrection is hard.

Hard to understand.

Hard to explain.

Even harder to live.

Yet, here you are in a church, on this Easter Sunday morning,

Going against the grain of public opinion and that which is easy;

Doing your best to remember and to celebrate and to claim the promise of Christ alive.

I am glad we can be here together this morning.

After Easter, a couple years ago, I received an email from a Jewish friend and colleague who recounted for me a conversation he had with a member of his congregation. He had been asked, whether seriously or *tongue in cheek* I don't know, "*How can Christians seriously believe that Jesus came back from the dead and went walking around?*" My friend ended his email by asking me, "*What should I say?*" In a few sentences, I tried my best to do what I am not sure I have been able to adequately do in 30+ years of Easter sermons and that is completely explain what I think *resurrection* is and means. After all, how can anyone fully explain something that is, at least in part, mystery and promise. But, in a few sentences I did my best and then clicked "Send." Not too long afterwards I received his reply. And, while I forget the exact words he used and his email was long ago lost in some digital black hole, what I do remember is the touch of sarcasm wrapped around his response.

How can Christians believe that Jesus came back from the dead and walked around?

Being again, now, just like he was before?

Here's the thing, I don't think he did.

I don't think that is what resurrection means.

I don't think that is what Easter is about.

And, I am pretty sure that is not what the Gospels describe when they use the imagery of earthquake and angels and stones rolled back.

The Bible doesn't talk about some type of resuscitation.
Some heaven sent form of mouth to mouth or CPR.
What the Bible talks about is **resurrection**.
Not as he was before he was killed, but Christ alive in some new way.
Presence. Yes. Real. Yes.
But alive now to and in the lives of those who came next.
Those who dared to believe what he said was true.
Those who dared to live as they had seen him live.
Those who dared to touch and to heal and to teach and to share and to care just as Jesus had.
Christ alive...
In them and through them.
Now, what about you?

And, maybe that is what Easter is all about.
Some wild whisper of faith that reminds us that what we celebrate today is not past tense, but present. Not only about Jesus or even primarily about Jesus, but mostly about you and me when we do our best to take what he taught and take what he did and embody it again in our own lives. To have Christ be alive again, in some small way, in who we are and through who we are and in what we do. And when we find the courage to live that way, Christ is present again and God's Kingdom comes close.

So, maybe today...
In the world in which we live...
With the headlines in the news just what they are *Christ alive* looks something like this:
When the hungry are fed, *Christ is alive*.
When the broken are healed, *Christ is alive*.
Can you say it with me...if not out loud, at least to yourself?
When crosses no longer crucify, *Christ is alive*.
When the stones of addiction or arrogance or abuse no longer entomb, *Christ is alive*.
When you welcome the stranger, *Christ is alive*.
When you care for another, *Christ is alive*.
When you embrace the overlooked or forgotten, *Christ is alive*.
When enemies are recognized as neighbors, *Christ is alive*.
When hope overcomes despair, *Christ is alive*.
When the poor are not pushed aside, but invited to join you at the table, *Christ is alive*.
When you practice compassion, *Christ is alive*.
When you pray deeply on behalf of another, *Christ is alive*.
When we help God's Kingdom come close, *Christ is alive*.
When you come back from the dead, *Christ is alive*.

And so it is Easter.
Thank God it is Easter.
As we do our best to practice resurrection.
And add our whisper to those other wild whispers of faith that Christ, indeed, is alive.

May it be so, O God.
May it be so.