

Sermon Outline - Sun, April 4, 2021 – Easter Sunday

Overview: Today we celebrate Jesus' journey from death to resurrection. On Good Friday we remembered Jesus' death on the cross and reflected on the idea of Jesus as the Sacred Seed. Many would think of this as a reference to his birth from his mother Mary. He was the Son of Mary and the Son of God, both human and divine. But we also talked about what it takes for a seed to germinate. Many seeds, particularly the seeds that grow trees, have a tough outer seed pod that has to be broken before the seed can actually be planted. Jesus' body is completely broken on the cross. And then most seeds have to be planted in the dark ground where, with a little moisture, they can begin to sprout and send a shoot up that will meet the sun and begin to grow.

Story Exegesis

- After 2 nights women bring spices to preserve Jesus and minimize the stink of death
- They aren't sure how they will get to him because there is a big stone in front of the tomb
- They are shocked when they get to the tomb and the stone is rolled away
- For three years Jesus had been teaching them and inspiring them to believe that miracles were possible. He invited in the folks that others left on the margins
- They cut him down because they believed that they could end his ministry by killing him
- We think that most of the tree is what we see above ground, but the truth is that the strongest of trees have a root system underground that goes far and wide

Key Points –

1. **The root is old.** God has been showing us the way for a long time. Jesus often referred to the Hebrew Bible to make it clear that he was not departing from that teaching but showing us how to live – making it tangible by offering himself as an example
2. **The tree was cut down.** The Roman Empire and the religious authorities thought that by getting rid of Jesus they could stop the movement. His crucifixion was a message to everyone else to stay in line and not to resist the status quo.
3. **But his blood became the water that nourished the roots and created opportunity for new growth.** He exposed the status quo for what it was. A system willing to kill an innocent man. A system obsessed with control rather than transformation and justice.
4. **We have the responsibility to be the shoots, and branches that rise up.** Sometimes we focus on Jesus coming back but he made it clear to the apostles that it was their job to take the message farther than him and to expand the movement worldwide.

Today is exactly 53 years from the day that Martin Luther King was killed. Justice is on trial in Minneapolis because George Floyd was cut down. In Atlanta the family and friends of Soon, Hyun, Suncha, Yong, Delaina, Paul, Xiaojie, and Daoyou are still in mourning. The people in Myanmar are standing up to the military and many young activists have lost their lives. Now more than ever the new shoots are called to rise up.

Core Questions –

1. What are the ancient truths that ground you? How are you staying connected to that truth in ever-changing times?
2. Jesus was cut down in the most painful of ways but his blood gave nourishment for new growth. What painful experiences in your life could also nourish new growth in your life?
3. Where can you see shoots of new growth emerging in your life, in your community or in the world? How can you celebrate and nurture that growth?