

Where Would You Look?

3-31-2013

Easter Sunday

Luke 24:1-12

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words. 9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

It's behind the mayonnaise! That's almost a joke around my house. It's either something I'll tell Maggie, or something she will tell me. It started in the refrigerator, but it has spread to almost anywhere and everywhere. Picture this if you will: Maggie is sitting on the couch in the living room reading the newspaper. I get up from my recliner, walk into the kitchen to the refrigerator, open the door and immediately ask, Maggie, where is the chicken salad? Or I ask, Maggie, where is the Colby-jack cheese? Actually the question is Maggie, when I opened the refrigerator door, whatever I wanted when I came over here and opened the door didn't jump right out into my hand, so where is it? 99% of the time, if I would take about ½ of a second, I'll see what ever I'm looking for. But, it's so much easier to ask Maggie than it is to look for it. She knows this so her pat answer to me has become, it's behind the mayonnaise. That is her very polite way of telling me that if I will look for just a second I will probably see it. If not, then I might actually have to move an item or two and look behind whatever is right on the front of the refrigerator shelf. There has been an occasion or two where she has been looking for an item, not necessarily one found in the refrigerator, like where is that piece of paper with a note or a specific book or, whatever, and I found it for her. When she asked where I found it, I have proudly been able to tell her it was behind the mayonnaise. We've been able to laugh about this because it's a way we pick at each other. But this morning, I think this is a question we all need to answer, where would you look?

Let's look at verses one thru three of this morning's scripture lesson again: **On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. They had gone to the tomb to embalm the body.** Where else would they have gone? After Jesus had been crucified, Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body and prepared it for burial and placed it into a tomb that had never been used. The two Mary's had followed Joseph to the tomb. They knew exactly where Christ had been buried. There would be no mistake when they went back to embalm Him. Now, they had come with the necessary spices and perfumes to embalm Jesus' body and His is gone. I don't think I can begin to fathom the surprise, or the fear, or dread they felt. I'm not even sure those would be the right feelings they might have had. Jesus was missing. They knew he was dead. They knew this was his tomb. But where was He? Now where would they look? Verse four thru six: **⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:** Three different times Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection and all three times no one knew or understood what He had been talking about. Now the angels were explaining it once again: **He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you.** We have talked before about how the disciples and some of the people with them didn't

understand a lot of the things Jesus told them. This is the perfect example. Jesus had told them, I will be killed by sinful men. But, I will rise from the dead in three days. Mary and Mary truly didn't understand. What they did know was that their Lord had been crucified and buried in this tomb. They had come to the tomb fully expecting to find Jesus' body and embalm it. When they got there, the body was gone; it was missing. Isn't that how the Easter story goes in each of the four gospels? Each gospel is a little different, but when Mary Magdalene and depending on the gospel, whoever was with her reached the tomb, Jesus was gone. Imagine the surprise, or shock, whatever you prefer to call it. The body was gone. In the Gospel of Luke, Mary and Mary went back to the other eleven and told them what they had found or rather not found. But no one believed them. Verse 11: **But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.** We don't really need to understand why the disciples didn't believe them, we just know that they didn't. Listen to verse 12: **Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.** And now Peter knows that Mary and Mary were indeed telling the truth.

All of this was happening at or around sunrise. One of the gospels even talks about Mary Magdalene going to the tomb while it was still dark. We don't know exactly what time it all happened, but it was early in the morning. That's one of the reasons we celebrate a Sunrise Service just like we had here this morning. We don't know how long it took the two Mary's to find the other eleven or even how long it took Peter to go to the tomb. We just know Peter went to the tomb. From that point we lose track of time. We don't know what happened for the rest of that day. Each of the four gospels talk about Jesus appearing to the eleven later that same evening. Maybe it's just me, but I can't help but wonder if the rest of the disciples went to look for the body anywhere or if they stayed in the room, hiding out of fear. I wonder if I had been one of the eleven, would I have gone to look for him or would I have stayed hidden. If you were one of the eleven, what would you have done? Jesus is not at the tomb. Where would you look? I think it is an extremely important question for us to ask this Easter morning; where would you look. We know Jesus has risen. We know He is not in the tomb. Where would you look for Jesus Christ?

In 1980 the movie Urban Cowboy starring John Travolta and Debra Winger was released. It was a romantic drama with a country-western music theme. The theme song for the movie was sung by Johnny Paycheck and was titled "Looking for Love in All The Wrong Places". The first two lines of the chorus went like this; *I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places, Lookin' for love in too many places. Searchin' her eyes, lookin' for traces Of what I'm dreamin' of.* I wondered why this chorus kept running through my mind as I was working on this sermon. Then it kind of hit me: **Jesus is love!** Are we looking for love, are we looking for Jesus, in all the wrong places? If you are looking for Jesus, where do you go, where do you look? Do we confuse Jesus with earthly satisfaction? Do we confuse Jesus with earthly fulfillment? If you spend much time seriously talking with people, you will see that a lot of them are searching for something. A lot of people feel unfulfilled, unsatisfied. They are constantly looking for something. They are empty inside, and they try to fill that void. Too many times, they try to fill the void, the emptiness in their lives, with earthly things. They tend to think that a bigger house, or a newer car, or having their kids in the right schools, or being a member of the right club will give them what they are looking for. But who they are trying to satisfy is man. They are trying to please their friends and neighbors. They are looking for some type of social status. It becomes a vicious cycle; the more they obtain, the more they want, and the more they want, and the more they want. As the song says, "looking for love in all the wrong places."

Where do you go to find Jesus? Obviously one of the places is here in church. The name of the room we are sitting in this morning is "sanctuary". Sanctuary, it is a place of refuge and protection. Here you are among like-minded people who worship our risen Lord. Here we feel the love of Jesus Christ. Here we don't just feel His love, we actually feel protected by the love of Jesus Christ. Here we feel safe from all the toils and troubles of our worldly life. Here we have refuge and protection, sanctuary. Here the outside world is miles and miles away. Here is Jesus Christ; here is inner peace. Here souls commune with our risen Lord. But this isn't the only place you can find Jesus.

Where else will we find Jesus; how about in nature. I think most of you know by now that one of the places I feel closest to Jesus is while I'm sitting in a deer stand. I actually have a daily devotion book called [A Look At Life From A Deer Stand: Devotional](#). I can relate to this author every time I climb into a stand. As I sit in the stand it is perfectly quiet, well, except for the breeze softly floating through the trees. The breeze, Jesus' breath. It's perfectly quiet, except for the myriad of Jesus' creatures slipping through the trees, the birds, the squirrels, the rabbits, the fox. In that stand I find Jesus on a cold frosty morning, when the sun is just breaking through the tree branches, bringing His warmth and light to the day. You can't spend time in nature without seeing Jesus at work. A deer stand, that's my special place; I hope each of you have a special place where you feel close to Jesus.

Where would you look for Jesus? In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, **“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”** Look for Jesus Christ in the soul of a child. Children are so beautiful in their innocence. They do not know hate, they do not know malice, they do not know bigotry. We as adults teach those things to them. Look at the awe in their faces as they watch a butterfly. Stand quietly, and watch the purity of an infant as he or she sleeps. Go downstairs on Sunday morning and watch our children in Worship and Wonder. You will see them searching for Jesus. We need to search for Him too.

In Matthew 20: 28 we read: **just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" And in Mark 10:45, **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" And John 13: 15-17, **I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.** Jesus told us to go and serve. Do you want to find Jesus Christ; then serve! You can truly find Jesus Christ through service to your fellow man.

There are so many places you can find Jesus Christ if you are truly looking for Him. During the Lenten season we heard six different messages and each of them had a theme. Week one, resistance to temptation; Jesus Christ will help you resist if you allow him to. Week two was to love our neighbors, as Christ loves us. Week three, repent of our sins through Jesus Christ. Week four, trust in Jesus and know that his presence is always with us. Week five, Jesus taught us that we must forgive just as He forgives us. And last week, week six, was on faithfulness. We talked about how Christ is always faithful to us, even when sometimes we aren't faithful to Him. And this week, because of His death and resurrection, we are once again reminded of just how much He loves us.

And that ladies and gentlemen is the Good news this morning. Jesus Christ died for us, and in dying, He took our sins to the grave with Him. Jesus Christ was re-born. Jesus Christ rose from the tomb. And through Him, we may each have a rebirth to a sin free life. No ladies and gentlemen, we do not need to go to the tomb. We do not need to look for the living among the dead, He is not there. Jesus Christ is alive and well. He is not hard to find, but you must be willing to seek Him. You must be willing to open your eyes and your heart and look for Him.

Amen