

The Colors of Faith—White

Easter Morning 2014

March 20, 2014

John 20:1-18

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Mag'dalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. 4 They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; 5 and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, 7 and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rab-bo'ni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." 18 Mary Mag'dalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

He is Risen, He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Our Lord is in the grave no more! The tomb is empty! Rejoice! Shout Amen! Start to dance like some of us did yesterday at Zumba! Celebrate the Risen Lord! Okay, I might be expecting a bit too much but Happy Easter! What a glorious morning this is no matter the weather. It is always a day of celebration and excitement! We have gone through our time of reflection and penitence throughout the last six weeks. We have explored the colors of faith black, red, blue, green, yellow, purple, and today we explore white and what it means in light of this Holy Day that we celebrate: Easter.

We have heard again the scripture of Mary Magdalene as she heads to the tomb and how she informed the Disciples particularly that of Peter who goes to the tomb to see for himself if what Mary said was true. They do not see his body there so they return home. Mary stays and weeps for she not only lost her Lord through death but also has no idea where he has been laid. She looks up and sees two angels in the tomb who ask her why she is weeping her response is the same that she told the Disciples almost like a refrain and almost as if she in her grief can say nothing else. When she is again asked by the man she assumed to be the gardener why are you weeping she responds differently almost as if hopeful that this person would know that if he did know she would go and get Jesus' body.

But then Jesus says her name Mary, and she recognizes him and cries out Rabboni. Jesus' response in verse 17 is "Do not hold on to me" that he still has to return to and be with God. Is not that it my friends? The epitome of our faith and of our lives is that when Jesus calls out our names we respond with recognition and gladness in our heart of hearts. That my friends is the meaning of Easter. That we recognize our Lord and Savior when he calls out to us by name. That we recognize what his life means in light of our own lives. That we see him as Lord and Savior of our very lives.

Lord and Savior of our lives, what does that mean exactly? (Pull out white board on easel with markers) White typically represents purity, unblemished, cleanliness. How we begin in fact is pure and sinless. As we have been talking about our faith let us consider our lives as children and what that might look like, and as we become more mature we keep adding layer after layer into our lives. Sometimes we try to wipe the slate clean by ourselves but it does not quite all go away.

But Jesus calls out names my friends He calls out each of us by name. He says Kara, Lynnie, Pat, BJ, Bob, Elizabeth, Kelsey, Carolyn, Larry, Steve, He calls out each one of us by name and offers us redemption through his blood and then our slates are truly wiped clean as we rise out of the baptismal waters. We have been made new in our belief in our Lord and savior not being in that empty tomb.