

March 27, 2016  
Easter Sunday  
The Rev. Laura Blazek

Easter movies are by no means as abundant as Christmas movies. The majority that do exist are mostly about the Easter bunny and Easter eggs, but there are a few that are based on the Bible, albeit sometimes loosely. One of these Bible based movies is entitled “The Greatest Story Ever Told”.

The title always bothered me. It is just so...wrong. A told story implies that the story is over and done, that we are distanced from the actual event and are merely bystanders as the drama unfolds.

Easter, the resurrection, is a living, breathing story that never truly ends. Easter is the greatest story that we live every day of our lives because we are a resurrection people. It is a story of love- a love that couldn't and can't be sealed in a tomb by a stone. It is a story that begins with creation, not just the creation of the world but with the creation of each and every one of us- created in love, for love. The path of Holy Week is paved with love- from Jesus kneeling at the feet of His disciples to wash their feet, to the top of a hill on which stood a cross that bore Christ's body as He died. It is a story of a love so great that a stone couldn't contain it and death couldn't end it. The tomb is empty and Jesus is risen from the dead.

Outside the empty tomb Mary Magdalene weeps, wondering where her Lord could be. Her grief turns to joy as Jesus calls her name, “Mary!” And then, though John doesn't say this, I imagine that Mary envelopes Jesus in a bone-crushing hug before going off to tell others, “I have seen the Lord.”

This is the story that we live and witness every day of our lives in thousands of places and thousands of ways as we share Christ's love with a broken and hurting world. When we share a cup of coffee with a friend, we can look at each other and say, “I have seen the Lord.” When we serve a meal to the homeless, we can look into each other's eyes and both say, “I have seen the Lord.” When we come to the table to receive Christ's love in the form of His most precious body and blood, we can say, “I have seen the Lord.”

But there are also the dark black days that find us struggling up a hill with the weight of the world upon our shoulders only to find ourselves in a tomb of our own making. A tomb sealed by stone that is so heavy we feel crushed by its weight, and we know that nothing can free us from the darkness that entombs us. God's love though can't be held at bay by a stone no matter what it is made of. The resurrected Jesus rolls away the stone, freeing us from our darkness, but we have to believe and have faith that our burdens are lifted, and that the stone that trapped us is gone. Christ removes that which binds us, but we have to step out into the light of the day.

And there are times when we have stepped out of our darkened tomb, stepped out in faith only to look around and wonder, “Lord, where are you?” Perhaps we even find ourselves weeping like Mary Magdalene did on this Easter morning. Through our pain, our heartache, our grief, our loneliness and our desolation; through our tears that threaten to fall and the sobs that rack our body we will hear our name called out in love by our risen Lord- “Mary!”, “James!”, “Charlotte!”, “Ray!”, insert your name here. Jesus calls to us if we will only listen, then we can turn to Him and say, “I have seen the Lord.”

The path of our life isn't so straight as Holy Week would make it appear. Life happens and our path takes twists and turns and loops back on itself. So some days or maybe years we find ourselves trapped in a tomb feeling lost, alone and wondering, ‘Lord, where are you?’ Other days or years find us struggling under the burdens of the world only to have someone step beside us offering help to lighten our load, and we see our Lord in all His glory. And still others where we allow our lives to be shaped by the resurrection so that our words and actions cause others to look at us and say, “I have seen the Lord.”

Resurrection events happen throughout our lives. Christ is risen and so are we. Christ's love frees us from our tombs. Christ's love is life-giving. Christ's love changes us so that loving God and our neighbor becomes a way of being. When we live the resurrection we can look at the world around us and say, “I have seen the Lord.” When we live the resurrection then the world will look at us and say, “We have seen the Lord.” The wonder and joy of Easter is with us each as every day as we live the greatest story ever.

Amen.