

Sunday Morning Worship at Brentwood, Mar 27, 2016

Easter Sunday

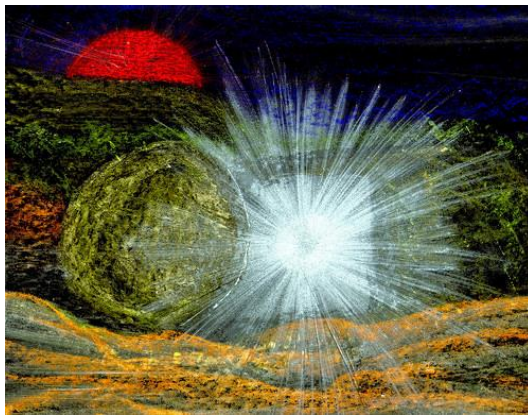
Notes for the sermon on *Wondering What Happened*

Luke Luke 24:1-12 – Sermon Text = Luke 24:11-12

***But these words seemed to them an idle tale,
and they did not believe them.
but Peter got up and ran to the tomb;
stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves;
then he went home, amazed at what had happened.***

[Hymns = 243, 258, 248]

Key focus = in this garden, all that flowed from the arrogant disobedience and rebellion of the first garden is overcome – God repairs the rift and reconciles all of creation with the divine community of the Holy Trinity



A Tale of Two Gardens

- What happened that first Easter remains a source of wonderment, confusion, and dispute – 2.2 billion people think God saved the world – the remaining 3.8 billion+, if they have heard the story, think it is ‘an idle tale” – and what about us?
- I’m still learning through my wondering about what happened that morning – that’s my stance to my faith these days – learning – Eric Hoffer was a longshoreman in San Francisco who wrote moral and social philosophy while waiting for railcars and boats – I no longer respect learned people – instead I have growing respect for learners – John Calvin – conversion gave him a teachable spirit – keep wondering – keep learning - but all in the context of a relationship given to us by God in Christ through the Spirit that is the ground of our flourishing – our whole being (instincts, emotions, and intellect) testify to that

Sermon notes of Rev Dr Brian Fraser,
Minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC

reality – what Peter relied on that Easter morning – took him back to the garden – then home again amazed

- So, as I have continued to wonder what happened on that first Easter, this year's insight has to do with gardens – this is the tale of two gardens – the first with Adam and Eve, where intimacy and friendship with God was broken through arrogant disobedience and rebellion – a line from Joni Mitchell's *Woodstock* – about getting back to the garden – we are “caught in the devil's bargain” - the second with Jesus Christ, where God repaired that rift and reconciled humanity and all of creation to himself – what happened that first Easter is that big – the course of the history of this creation changed forever and for good!
- But what is that good – and how have we continued to rebel against it in our arrogance and disobedience?

The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

- One of the great opening lines in the history of the novel – Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* – the paradoxical times of the French Revolution – the old order passing and the new order yet to be clear – wandering in the deserts and bad lands – full of dangers and disasters – times like ours
- How does our conviction that God saved the world that first Easter speak to such times? – let me suggest three messages worth wondering about
 1. Fear and division does not have the last word, regardless of how things appear on the surface – and regardless of how violent and vicious things actually are on that surface – the final word, already spoken and shown in Jesus Christ, is that love will win
 2. There is a home where wonder and amazement is welcomed and nourished to flourish – that home in this world is the church – this foretaste, this forerunner of the Commonwealth of God quietly but persistently unfolding one act of hospitality and generosity at a time – the story of the Prodigal played over and over again – slightly different takes each time, but all with the core message of 'Welcome Home' with no conditions
 3. In that home and its gardens, everyone will find the friendship and intimacy with God that we were created for – we will come to our senses, realizing what our arrogant disobedience and rebellion has done to our world – we will begin to develop habits of humble submission and service to the loving God who went through the worst we can imagine and more – all for the flourishing of this world

There is a brilliance in this act of God that both blinds us and enlightenes us – may we become afresh this morning learners in Christ for the sake of God's Commonwealth