

A Fearful Joy

Sermon Notes for Apr 16 2017 at Brentwood – Easter Sunday



Ps 114 and Matt 28:1-10

**So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy,
and ran to tell his disciples.
(Matt 28:8)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Our initial response when things change dramatically is fear – there is safety in things staying the same – or when change takes place slowly in an expected direction – but dramatic change that turns things upside down – that generates fear – there's a trembling in creation, turmoil in our worlds – the curtain is torn apart – we see new things in new ways, more directly and clearly – we see what God's love works like in human flesh – it draws in and bonds with the dispossessed and the unacceptable – it reveals a different way of understanding the purpose of God for God's world - and that's scary
- That may be what's going on in our minds – all this Easter stuff just doesn't make any rational sense – how can I explain this to my kids, my grandkids, my friends, my colleagues? – maybe even to myself? – and if isolated, narrow, modern scientific reasoning were the only way of knowing, as many in our culture assume, then you would be right to be embarrassed and afraid – none of this makes any sense in that framework of understanding – you would be right to fear for your reputation for being normal and sensible
- But full human understanding involves more than our narrowly-defined brains - our hearts and guts have a role to play as well, wisdom to contribute to a deep and broad human understanding – and in those dimensions of our knowing, this event we are celebrating this morning makes much more joyful sense – the fear of something so different and new is still very real – but the benefits of this new thing as they resonate in our hearts and guts quickly overwhelm those fears – the wisdom of this love that conquers death speaks to our souls, brings tears to our eyes, and generates a great joy that infuses our whole being, that energizes us at the very core of our being, where we live in the dance of the Holy Trinity – that how we are truly known by and, as a result, know the reality of Easter – Christ is risen! – He is risen indeed! – and the whole of creation is changed

At this point in our ponderings, then ...

As a result of Easter, new possibilities for each of us and our flourishing as contributors to God's mission for this world have been given to us – what are those? – how do we participate more faithfully and more fully in that redemption? – those are kinds of questions that we will explore together in the months ahead – exploring together the power of Christ's joyful over to overcome all our fears

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
minister with Brentwood Presbyterian Church, Burnaby, BC