

Easter Sunrise Meditation: "Hope Dawned Anew"

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Now I know there may be a few who disagree with me on what I am about to say, but I believe there is something special about waking up extra early on Easter and, in the stillness of the morning, beginning the day. Being among the first to move around in the village, with few cars passing on the street, making our way to this place to proclaim together that "Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!" Now, a lot of planning and preparation goes into making this service possible. A lot of hands and hearts come together, giving of themselves to make this a special celebration! From the music chosen and rehearsed for today, to the setup, the cross and chairs being transported to the pier, all of this needs to happen. We of course have the goodies too ready to go for after worship. Yes, there is a lot to plan and we can plan for so much and with the willing help of so many, we make this happen each and every year – for this is indeed a day to start our morning with celebration and to do so with one another! Still, every year, there is one thing that we cannot control, no matter how much planning we put into this glorious celebration. Any guesses? The weather. You got it right and contrary to popular belief, Marcia and I have very little pull over what the weather ends up being. Still, we all love a picturesque Easter Sunrise! With the clouds parting at the exact right time, and golden rays of sunshine beaming forth into the day. A slight chill of the morning is okay, but not too chilly, with minimal wind or no wind is ideal. Of course, in reality, we can deal with just about anything but the one thing we really don't want is precipitation.

And so, every year as we enter Holy Week, I start looking at that long range forecast. Throwing up a prayer here and there for good weather. This week was no different. I saw the little shower icon for today appear on my phone when I checked last Sunday and began to pray for better weather and clearer skies. After all, who wants a rainy, soggy Easter Sunrise service?

Still, this week, as I found myself, quite honestly stressing out just a bit about the forecast wondering what the weather would actually look like for today, I finally let it all go as I was reading over the resurrection story again. As I was, my eye caught the words that are not in the gospel. In none of the gospels, not in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John – in none of them is there mention of a picturesque sunrise. There is no mention of perfect weather and golden rays of sunshine beaming forth when the women and several other disciples went to the tomb that morning. (as much as we like to picture it that way)! For all we know, it could have been a cloudy morning, with a chill in the air, and a threat of rain on the horizon (or even with a few drops falling). Yes the sun rose that first Easter morning just like it rose today! But the conditions of the sky that morning and the weather of that day, our story makes no mention.

Why is that? Why is there no mention of the weather that day? I think we all know the answer already. Because, in the end, that's not what matters and this truth brought me great comfort as I looked at the weather forecast for today. Whether the sun was coming up over the horizon as Mary arrived at the tomb, the son of God had still risen! Whether the sun broke through the clouds that morning at the perfect time, the son of God still broke the chains of death! Whether the sun beamed gloriously that morning, the son of God did radiate a powerful love which death could not hold and which the grave could not contain!

For whether the dawning of that first resurrection morning came with sunshine or clouds, clear skies or rain showers, what did dawn that day was hope. An eternal hope of life and love with God. A hope that the message which Jesus brought would in fact change the world and will change the world. There was hope dawning anew for all who felt cast out in the world, for all who suffered, for all who grieved. There was a hope dawning anew which brought great comfort and unending joy! The hope which dawned anew that day and which we celebrate this day is one that darkness will not win out but light will overcome! It is a hope that, in the end, love wins and love always wins.

Beloved People of God, this day on which we gather may not have dawned in exactly the way we wish would have come to pass, we may have hoped for a day more like our bulletin cover than what is outside, but the hope which dawned that first Easter day, well that hope is with us today and every day - dawning anew! May we carry that forth into this rainy, cloudy day for this is the news which brightens our lives. This is the news which brightens our world! That Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Let the Son of God forever shine forth in our lives and in our world! Happy Easter and amen!