

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Easter Meditation: "Tell it Again!"

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To hear "I love you" can be a powerful thing to experience in life. Whether it is hearing the words "I love you" from your significant other for the very first time or even for the last time, or maybe hearing "I love you" from your children, grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren! Maybe it is hearing the words "I love you" poured out to you from family, friends, and even complete strangers in the midst of a particularly difficult time in your life. There is no doubt in my mind that these words can feel powerful.

Now, while I was growing up in Central Pennsylvania, these were not words that my family found easy to say. And I think it was just a product of the culture – we didn't say I love you, particularly the men, and that was just how it was. These words did not roll off our tongue very naturally. And while I feel we did our best, as any flawed human being can do, to show each other that we loved one another through the ways in which we treated and cared for each other, still the words were often absent.

However, I remember when these words of expressed love began to work their way back into our vocabulary and it was soon after my family experienced the unexpected and sudden death of my uncle. As my family grieved and was trying to discover what life would now look like without the presence of Uncle Steve, these words began to surface. I remember that my grandmother, who was my uncle's mother, started to hug us all goodbye whenever we would see her and would say "we love you." Not "I love you" but "we love you". And I remember always being puzzled by the "we". Who was the "we"? Eventually, I came to believe that the "we" she was referring to was her and my grandfather (because remember, the men in our family did not say "I love you" very easily). So I figured she knew that he couldn't say it so she would speak for them both. However, three years later, after my grandfather passed away, she continued to say "we love you". Was it out of habit – that she had gotten so used to saying "we" that she couldn't bring herself to say "I"? Was it that she still felt my grandfather's presence and

the “we” still rang true for her? Or, was the “we” much bigger than perhaps any of us could comprehend?

To this day, I still wonder about that “we” and I also wonder how her faith was present in that “we”. Was it out of habit, was it to reinforce that my grandfather still loved us even after he was gone? Was it to share the entire familial sense of love that the “we” of our entire family, past, present, and future greeted us with? Or was it a “we” that include God? Was her “we love you” meant to express her faith that, even in the challenges of life that we had, not only the love of family but the love of God with us through it all?

I prefer to think that there was at least some truth in the latter. That the “we” was much bigger than ourselves but encompassed the love of God that we so boldly celebrate today. That when she said “we”, she was thinking of the love of God that came through the betrayal, desertion, and crucifixion and met us in the resurrection. I like to think that when she said “we”, she was thinking of the love of God that was so powerful that death could not hold it!

Today we celebrate once more, the powerful love of God that we hear about each and every Easter – in fact the powerful love of God that we hear about each and every Sunday, and hopefully are reminded of each and every day. And so let us cherish that closely – the love that was profoundly revealed at the empty tomb. Let us cherish the thought of knowing that we are loved by God, even to the cross and beyond. Let us cherish the love that was so powerfully revealed in the life of Jesus Christ – a love that pulled people in who thought they were outside the breadth of God’s love – he reached out and said, my love is for even you! And so we hold that love, knowing that the love of God revealed in Christ has gone to the grave and back for us and for all the world and that nothing, absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God!

And so here we are, loved by God and called to be disciples of that great love! For just as the first disciples will soon find out, the story does not end on that Resurrection

morning. The love does not stop there for this love is eternal. This love is one that must be spread, it must be shared. This love is one that we are called to share out into the world. We are called to embody this love, for after all love comes from God, and we must love the world deeply. We are called to boldly say “we love you” to each and to all.

Every year on Easter, we tell of this profound love but it is time to tell it again! We tell of the love that reach out to all and is off limits to no one, but it is time to tell it again! We tell of the power of God’s love and the lengths to which God will go for that love to be revealed but it is time to tell it again! The world needs the love of Jesus and the world needs the lived love of faithful disciples. And so, are you ready to go out into the world and proclaim “we love you”? To share your lived love from God and the love of our Living Lord? Through every act of lending a helping hand, tell the world again “we love you!” Through feeding the hungry and clothing the naked tell the world again “we love you!” Whenever you stand for righteousness, justice, and peace tell the world again “we love you!” For the world needs this love - the world needs this powerful love found in Jesus Christ - the world needs the love of Resurrection Morning. In all that you say, and all that you do, will you tell of it again? For Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed! Amen.