

Scripture: Luke 24:1-12

Easter Meditation: "Light Overcomes!"

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Easter has long been a joyous celebration within the church! It has been and continues to be a day for shouts of "Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed!" It is a day for smiles and sheer delight to be shared. This day is one that needs those grand choir anthems, the power of musical fanfare on the organ, and jubilant congregational singing. It is a day filled with beautiful flowers, candles aglow, and all the food and fun shared because this is a day of celebration! For on this morning, we retell the story of Jesus' resurrection. An event which has given hope to people throughout the centuries. An event which shows the world that death does not have the final word, that love is stronger than the grave, and that in the end, love wins and light overcomes! What a wonderful and glorious day we share together!

And every year as we approach Easter, as we journey to this joy-filled day once again, we go through Holy Week, a week filled with a mix of emotions, with many highs and lows to traverse. We started last Sunday as we remembered the Palms that waved and the shouts of "Hosanna!" which welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. We then continued on and remembered the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples. We remembered his arrest and trial. We remembered the beating, the pain, the agony of the soul he experienced. We remembered the rejection and the betrayal. We remembered his death. We remembered how his body was laid in a tomb. Why? Why do we recall all of these things when we already know how it ends? Why do we put ourselves through the emotional turmoil when we know the glories of Easter morning? Because, when we allow ourselves to go through the darkest of days, it makes the light of Easter morning that much more radiant! And not just that, it allows God to remind us that even in the most challenging of times, even in the most difficult days, there is still light to be witnessed - and on those days it may not be found in joyous music, in the fragrance of

flowers, or in candles aglow – but there is still light, it may feel dim or distant, but it's there and it is ready to overcome.

On Good Friday, one of the more challenging days of Holy Week, this sanctuary looked a whole lot different than it does today. With the church open from noon – 3pm for quiet prayer as we remembered the crucifixion and death of Jesus, as we marked the hours of darkness which fell across the land as Jesus hung on the cross, a hand full of people stopped in to mark the day and sit in the stillness – but for the most part, the sanctuary sat empty or nearly empty. There were no flowers to be seen, no candles were lit. The communion table was bare except for the cross which was veiled in black. The church bell rang solemnly to mark the death of Jesus. Yes Good Friday is certainly a heavier day in the life of the church. Still, in the midst of it all, I caught a glimpse of the light of God finding its way through the sorrow of the day.

At one point, I found myself sitting about halfway back in the sanctuary and in those moments of contemplation, again in the sorrow of the day, I looked down. And that's when I saw it. Shimmering in one of the cracks in the floor, was one lone piece of glitter. That's when I felt light enter the day again. Now, it's not just because I have a fascination with shiny things, I really don't, it's because that piece of glitter took me back to this past Christmas Eve – some of you may remember. In the sermon that night, I lamented about glitter on Christmas cards and how it sticks to you and you can never get rid of it all for just when you think you have found every last piece, you're bound to find one more speck. Still, the message that night was that this is exactly what we need – we need those lasting reminders, those glitter reminders which stick with us and tell us again of the hope, peace, joy, and love which we celebrate coming into the world through the birth of Jesus. That speck of glitter witnessed on Good Friday took me back to Christmas. And so later on that day, I looked back on that Christmas Eve sermon, and I reread these words: “So even when I still find a glimmering speck of glitter in the middle of March (or in this case, the middle of April!), I will be reminded of the gifts of Christmas which cling to our world forevermore. For what we celebrate today is

something so precious – don't let it end. Don't let the goodwill of this time of year end when the candles go out. Don't let the love that we strive to share in tangible ways with our neighbors and with our God end when the decorations come down. Don't let the joy of the gift of the Christ Child end when the last carol is sung. Let the moments that we share today cling to you and remind you always of the wonders of our God." In the sorrow of Good Friday, in the bleakness of a nearly empty sanctuary, before the cross veiled in black, remembering the moment Jesus breathed his last breath, that one speck of glitter brought a glimpse of light in the midst of it all. A holy reminder of Christmas in the middle of April, a reminder that love is so powerful and that love will see us through the hardest of times.

Beloved People of God, that is why I believe we journey through the whole story once again. That is why we don't forgo retelling the challenging and sorrowful parts of the passion of Jesus, because we all need reminders that light overcomes. Reminders that when we face our own trials, when we face doubt, when sorrow comes our way, when it can feel like the challenges of this world and of this life are about to consume us, there is still light, there is still hope. It may be light found in an aptly timed message from a friend, in the beauty of creation – the singing of a bird, the warmth of the sun, even in the refreshing power of rain. Light may be found in the love of those who care for us, whether family, chosen family, church family. It may be light found in the smile of a stranger, in the kindness of a companion, or it may even be found in the oddest of places and things, like one speck of glitter on a sanctuary floor. No matter what life brings, there is still light and when we see it, when we acknowledge it, when we welcome it, it has a way of growing and spreading and glowing not just in our lives but it is also shared with those around us.

Today, we celebrate the power of God's light, the light of the world, to overcome! We symbolize and rejoice in that light through all that we share today. And we remember that, on Good Friday, it certainly seemed like the light of Christ was lost. But it never went out and that light grew stronger and stronger, and burst forth that first Easter

morning - that first resurrection day! Beloved People of God, I will say it again, light overcomes! And so beloved people of God, when we experience day like Good Friday in our lives, may we seek that light and search for it so that it may illuminate our lives again. And on the joyous days like Easter morning, may we cherish it and share it with one another and with the world! And so, one more time, let us remember that light overcomes and the light of God will forever see us through! Thanks be to God! Happy Easter and Amen.