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Easter Sunday

April 4, 2010

Acts 10:34-43

Colossians 3:1-4

Luke 24:1-12

Christian pilgrims who travel to Jerusalem and the Holy Land are often moved by the beauty and holiness of the city. Christian shrines enable pilgrims to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. One is able to visit churches and shrines where the significant events of the Gospel may have occurred. The places associated with the birth of Jesus: Nazareth, Bethlehem, Galilee, come alive, as do the events of his life: his healings, his preaching, the feedings. Naturally, at this time of year in particular, pilgrims flock to the sites associated with Holy Week. The church that commemorates his entrance into Jerusalem, the Church of the Last Supper, the shrine at the Garden of Olives, and of course, the shrines which commemorate the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

How wonderful it is to be in Jerusalem at Holy Week, and Easter. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus truly come alive.

But. Pilgrims who have traveled to Jerusalem will tell you that there is a problem. The problem arises because in fact, there are two sites which claim to be the sites of the Resurrection.

The reasons for these two differing claims are many. Both probably have supporting evidence. Truthfully though the reasons for the different claims have as much to do with church history and politics as they do with archeological evidence. And the deeper truth is that neither one of them is correct.

In the Resurrection Gospel of Luke, the women come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. The men, we remember scattered and fled, abandoning Jesus when he was arrested in the garden. The women remained with Jesus through his passion, and remained near him as he hung on the cross and died. These women come to the tomb where they are told by the angels of his resurrection. They carried this news to the apostles, who scoffed. This is just an idle tale, or as one translation puts it: This is just “silly women’s chatter.”

An idle tale, silly women’s chatter, is that what the Gospel is? Worthless chit chat? Sometimes it seems to be just that. Often, those who profess to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, show so little evidence of it in their life. Often too often those who claim to believe in Easter are the most unloving, uncaring, and unjust. Often, too often, those who claim to believe in the Resurrection of Jesus are as greedy, judgmental, selfish, bigoted, as are those who do not believe. Often, too often the Easter story has no effect on the life of those who believe. And, if Easter does not make any difference in our life, if

believing in the resurrection does not make our life different than the life of unbelievers, , then the apostles are correct, it is nothing more than an idle tale, silly women (or men) chatter, worthless chit chat.

Who cares where the resurrection took place in Jerusalem, if there is no proof of it in the lives of believers? In fact, really, who cares about any of the sites from Jesus birth and life, if the Gospel does not make a difference in the lives of his followers. If it makes no difference in the way we live, the whole Gospel is just idle worthless chit chat. People want evidence, not in archeology, but in life. Christian's in Jerusalem argue about where the resurrection took place. And as I said, before, they are both wrong, even if one of them is right. They are both wrong because the site of the resurrection, the proof of the resurrection takes place in your life. When Jesus is resurrected in you, people come to believe. When you forgive, resurrection takes place. When you feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, resurrection takes place. When you strive for justice and peace, Jesus is risen. When you welcome the immigrant, shelter the homeless, embrace the outcast resurrection takes place. When you live in hope after a beloved one dies, resurrection takes place. When you are freed from the addictions that imprison you, Jesus is raised. When you love again, after the pain of betrayal, rejection or divorce, resurrection takes place. When you respect the dignity of every human being, resurrection takes place. When you get up after you have fallen, when you persevere in resisting evil, resurrection takes place. When you live your baptism, Jesus is raised.

Friends, may our lives be holy shrines commemorating Jesus life death and resurrection. May our lives be living proof, that the Easter story is not an idle tale, it is not worthless chit chat. May our lives be living proof that the Resurrection is the most amazing event ever to happen in Jerusalem. May our lives be living proof that resurrection is the most amazing event to occur, here, now, today.