

Easter Sunday Sermon--March 27, 2016
Sermon: What Is Your Story?
Acts 10:39-43, John 20:1-18

A newsboy was standing on the corner with a stack of papers, yelling, "Read all about it. Fifty people swindled! Fifty people swindled!"

Curious, a man walked over, bought a paper, and checked the front page. Finding nothing, the man said, "There's nothing in here about fifty people being swindled."

The newsboy ignored him and went on, calling out, "Read all about it. Fifty-one people swindled!"

Words from the witness stand:

Q: How old is your son-the one living with you.

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: My name is Susan.

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

A: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Q: And Mr. Dennington was dead at the time?

A: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy.

We all have something to say. Not always is it the whole truth or make sense! There are times when we "adjust" our message to suit those listening, to fit the situation, to keep from causing trouble. And other times, we have nothing to say because we just don't understand the message. In both of today's passages we hear of Jesus' command to tell others about His resurrection.

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. Acts 10:42
"Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" John 10:17b

The natural response to an amazing experience is to tell others about it. Can you think of a time when you saw something that was so incredible that you couldn't wait to tell someone else? Maybe it was a beautiful sunrise or sunset. The birth of a child. Perhaps a beautiful piece of music heard over the radio, if anyone actually listens to radio anymore!

That being the case, my question today is, "What is your message?"

There are many reasons we don't share the message of the cross and the empty grave. Perhaps it is because we are so far removed from the actual event. It doesn't make sense to us today—a man rising from the dead?

Even if he was God, rising from the dead? When was the last time you saw someone who was dead and was alive again? And the world waits to hear. Another reason we don't share the story of the cross and the empty grave

could be we are afraid we won't be believed. Luke's account of the resurrection includes this statement: Luke 24:11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Because we don't know enough about the Bible, enough about God, enough about theology, we keep our lips closed tight so we won't be ridiculed or be proven wrong. And the world waits to hear.

Finally, many fail to share the story because they don't know the One who was dead and is alive again. You see, it is possible that we have heard the stories, we have listened to those who have believed, but we don't really believe. We haven't truly placed our faith in Christ as our Savior AND Lord. It is possible to grow up in church, to pray the prayers, to sing the songs, and still not know the story, to not know the One who died for you.

So my question, again, is "What Story Will You Tell?" Today we have five individuals who will confess their faith before the congregation. They will testify that they have put their faith in Jesus Christ. They will stand on the story they have heard and commit themselves to not only take on the name of "believer," but also to live as a disciple.

What is your story? Is it the story of a life that was lived in darkness and sin, a life that was redeemed and transformed by the risen Lord? Or is your story one of doing all the right things at least most of the time, without really knowing why?

As we receive our friends into membership today, and as they profess their faith, I hope you will also remember your baptismal vows and renew them once again. And if you have not professed your faith in Christ, if you want to confess before all the world, or at least before all of us, that Jesus is your Lord, I hope you will do that today.