

CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
APRIL 24, 2011
Easter Sunday



Children's Sermon

John 20 (selected verses)

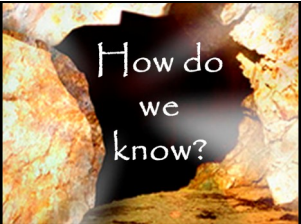
As we are used to saying in New Jersey, "Happy Eastah!" We welcome the children to the front of the sanctuary that we may celebrate God's good news and a proclamation for all people.



So, what are we celebrating? What are we celebrating today? (the children reply - Easter!). OK. But what is that? You could say in three words what we celebrate - HE IS RISEN! And usually when people say HE IS RISEN, anybody around who knows anything about Jesus and Easter and being part of the church says (congregation responds with HE IS RISEN INDEED!). Except they say it with a lot more enthusiasm like the Calvary people say it and here is how they say it (congregation once again says HE IS RISEN INDEED!).



He is risen indeed! Let me ask you a question. How do we know that he is risen? I wasn't there. I didn't see the empty tomb and I don't really know if you know how you know that he is risen. So I thought it might be helpful for us to hear the Easter story one more time and then we're going to try something so that you remember why it is and how it is that we are here on Easter Sunday when not one of us made that trip to the empty tomb. This is the story of the very first Easter.



At first light on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb.

One lady went to help get Jesus' body ready.

The stone had been removed from the entrance. She looked inside and saw the burial cloth in a pile.

Kind of like a robe that was just thrown down at the end of a bed. There

was obviously no one in it.

Jesus was not there. Mary became very sad and started to cry.

Put on your big, boo face. Mary started to cry.

She wanted to see him one last time. Through her tears, she looked again into the burial room. This time, she saw two angels in white. They asked, “Why are you crying?”

“Someone has taken my Lord away,” she said. “I don’t know where he is.”

In other words, she wanted to see him and he was not there anymore.

Turning around, she was surprised to see a man standing near her. “Sir,” she asked, “do you know where he is?”

Do you know where they’ve taken his body?

The man spoke her name; “Mary.”

And she recognized, when she heard her name, that this was a familiar voice that was speaking it.

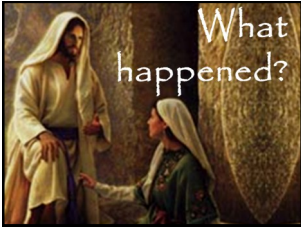
She knew it was Jesus. “Go to my brothers. Tell them that I am going to be with God!”

Mary went to the disciples and announced: “I have seen the Lord!”

A pretty incredible announcement. Mary was the first herald. A herald is a kind of ancient job and really anybody can do it. A herald announces something important that has happened, or a very important person who is about to arrive, or something that is about to happen.



And Mary, interestingly enough in what she said to the disciples, announced all three. She had all three pieces of good news.



She announced first of all what had happened and that was that she met Jesus and that he was alive. That's amazing.



Then she also announced that he will be arriving soon and that he will soon be with them.



And she also announced something that is going to happen. It's going to be a big family reunion - not only with the disciples and their master, but a huge family reunion with all the people who are brothers and sisters in the faith.



Anybody can share that good news. Anybody can be a herald. Anybody can pronounce and proclaim not only the good news but someone who is coming.



All you need is the message and a way to attract some attention.



Now, I know you guys love to attract attention. I've seen it first hand. So what we are going to do is help you be heralds in the same way that these players of brass instruments are heralds. In fact, one of the instruments that they brought with them today is a kind of a very special trumpet.



It's called a herald trumpet and you will notice that this part here called the bell is about twice as long as a regular trumpet and look at the cool little hooks. Do you know what they are for? They are to hang the flag of the important person who is about to show up.

So this is the sort of thing that you want to use to make an announcement that somebody very important is coming. And this is what it sounds like when a group of people who are really good at playing their instruments play their fanfare. Here is what one note is (brass quintet plays one note).

Now, I want to take them with me everywhere I go so that when I walk into the room I hear (brass quintet plays a fanfare). What could be better than that?



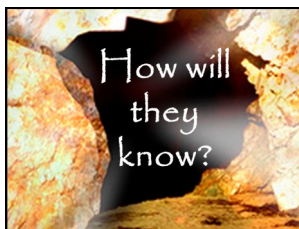
So, you guys can be heralds in the same way that they are because they are going to teach you how to play an instrument. You are going to need about 5 minutes to learn it and they are going to take you across the hallway into Fellowship Hall where they are going to give you your very own herald trumpet. In about 5 minutes you are going to learn how to play it and then you are all going to come back and you are going to stand right up here and we are going to be heralds of Christ.

Can you do that? Are you into it? I had a feeling you could. So, ladies and gentlemen, let's have you do your thing. They are going to take you across the hall. This will be more fun than people are supposed to have in church.



So, everybody goes that way and very shortly we will celebrate.

(Following a bell interlude, the children return and play their herald trumpets as a fanfare during the singing of the hymn, *Heralds of Christ*.)



How will people know about the celebration of Easter?



They will know because you are heralds of Christ.

Now listen closely, there are important instructions that go with this instrument. If you go to a restaurant today, if you go to grandma or grandpa's house, anywhere that you can go, sneak up behind someone and pull this thing out and you walk right over and you go (pastor blows the herald trumpet). After they pick their teeth up off the floor tell them why it is that you got a horn like this from that minister at church where they took too much time for children's sermon.

Alright - go! (children leave and Pastor continues)

Easter is both a historic event and a present reality. We celebrate what happened centuries ago but we are empowered to share what is happening now in us. Today is a day to fan the ashes of hope and put doubt in its final resting place and seal it with the stone of faith. Today we lay down the burdens of the past and lift our voices to herald God's present place and future glory. Alleluia! He is risen.

(The remainder of the service proclaimed the risen Christ through the spoken word and music)

