

Easter Day

March 23

Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18

I grew up in the country. We raised rabbits and chickens, sold eggs and had a huge garden. As I grew up, I could never understand the connection between rabbits, chicks and Easter. What we did with rabbits and chickens was a little different than what my little city friends did.

Rabbits are dirty, ill-tempered and unpredictable critters, yet bunnies were sold as the perfect Easter pet. I love America!

Remember Christmas. There is always the out cry about the real meaning of Christmas. Each year, the real meaning of Christmas seems to vary quite a bit. At least bunnies and chicks are safe at Christmas.

We don't hear the out cry for the real meaning of Easter. Perhaps everyone is clear about it. Carl Jung was asked that tricky question --- Do you believe in the resurrection? Dr. Jung replied, "No, that's N O." Then he said, "I know. K N O W."

Do we believe in the resurrection? This question may place people in a horrible, ungodly position --- one's security, the living presence of God, depends on their own belief. If I have no belief, there is no God.

Our relationship with the living God does not teeter on our belief of the event. There is no correlation between doubt and the living presence of God. The story is clear --- God raises Jesus, not our faith or some rock solid belief.

We are not here to celebrate a past event. Our reason for joy, our celebration, is not about Spring. Today we come together to celebrate the gift of God's grace to us. We absolutely know, we have experienced the presence of the living God. What would our life be like if we were not aware of the eternal presence of compassion and justice, mercy and forgiveness?

At Christmas, we have a wonderful story. The story is not life giving. The message of the story is life giving. Emmanuel --- God is with us.

Again today, our joy comes from the incredible awareness that you and I are one with resurrection. We are one with the body of Christ. We are one with forgiveness and mercy, with compassion and justice.

The risen Lord is with us and wants to be with us more and more. Emmanuel – God is with us.

Let's not forget the rest of the story. Jesus is not in the garden. He waits for us in Galilee. Remember, Galilee is where Jesus shared his first hug with God. Jesus began sharing this news, that God is in our hearts, in Galilee.

We know Emmanuel. We know God within. And the call is to follow. We will go and meet Jesus in Galilee. Be very clear. We do not bring Jesus to Galilee. He is already there.

It is very arrogant to dismiss the possibility of the presence of Jesus. But there's lots of blindness out there. We leave here. We will return to Galilee --- all those places and people we live with. Our eyes will be open for appearances of the living God.

This is no mystery for us.

Resurrection --- being one with the risen Lord is the very ground of our being.

Does this reality make us different? You can bet your bunnies it does.

Do we see ourselves as the living presence of compassion and justice, or are we one with corrupt principalities and powers of this world?

Is our focus on a continuing relationship with God?

Or is life energy devoted to managing fear with all the various tools provided by this day and age?

Do we share hugs with God? Are we friends with Jesus, or are we reluctant to talk about or even think about such things?

As we continue being Easter people, as we continue to experience and see the presence of God, we will change.

We will experience abundant life. We will indeed have peace that passes understanding.

For this is the way it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

We do indeed celebrate Easter. Amen.

Rev. Will Hinson

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