

Sermon

Holy Saturday 2025    April 19, 2025

The other night we shared a final meal with Jesus and watched as he was arrested and taken away to a trial with a predetermined verdict. Yesterday we watched from a safe distance as he was hung on a cross, died, and buried. And today . . . today we aren't sure of anything. Today we feel shocked about what happened. Maybe we feel grief. Maybe we have some self-loathing for not doing more – or anything – to prevent his arrest and crucifixion. Maybe we want to scream at the world, “Look what you’ve done!”

Hindsight being 20/20, when we reflect back on our time with Jesus we can see that he told us this would happen. He told parables about seeds being buried in the ground, dying, and then springing to life in a different form. On three separate occasions he told us he would suffer, die, and rise after three days. He said that when he was lifted up he would draw all people to himself. We’ve seen his suffering, death, and burial. The springing to life is yet to happen. So we wait and we hope.

Today is the day of waiting. Today is the day of hope.

This is where the disciples found themselves. Reeling from the events of the last two days, trying to make sense of it all, and wondering where they were going from here. Some of them found solace in familiar routines, so they went fishing. Eventually they would all gather together for comfort and support. But on this day, this day after his death, this day of Sabbath rest, the disciples just existed.

And this is where we live our lives, on this Holy Sabbath, this Holy Saturday. As Christians, every day is Holy Saturday. We live our lives in a perpetual state of already and not yet, of what has happened and what is hoped for. We live with what has been given while looking forward to what has been promised. As a former parishioner once said, “We live in the dash” – that time between our date of birth and our date of death.

So here we are, in this time of the dash, in a period between what has happened and what yet to come. This is, really, the only way we live our lives – one day at a time, ever reaching for the promise of resurrection and new life. Holy Saturday is the epitome of living a life in hope.

As we follow this promise of resurrection, may we live with a hope lived, not just hoped for. That is, we can't simply live our lives in the hopes that Jesus will whisk us away, or that Jesus will come and solve all our problems, or that we can rely on faith alone without having the actions it requires.

We have been called as disciples and are charged with going out into the world. We have been tasked with feeding, clothing, visiting, sheltering, and caring for those in need. We are to love our neighbor, welcome the foreigner, and include the outcast. Like the disciples who stood staring into the sky after Jesus' ascension needed to be reminded that they had work to do, we too are called to do more than stare at heaven.

The work we are called to do can only happen today, on this Holy Saturday, the day after crucifixion and the day before resurrection. On this Holy Sabbath, on this day when all creation holds its breath in hopeful anticipation, let us mourn the death of Jesus. Let us pay our respects at the tomb. But then let us live in the hope of what was promised and let us work to make that hope realized here on earth as it is in heaven.

Because today is Holy Saturday, and this is the only day we've got.

Amen.