

A Reversal through Faithfulness

Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

Mark 15.43-16.8

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—one God. Amen. Christ is risen! We continue to celebrate the joy of the resurrection of our Lord, and we have today, the second Sunday after Pascha, we have the myrrh-bearing women that we celebrate. And so to set the stage for this day, we have to have some background about what has happened in the past.

So we go back to the very beginning, we go to the book of Genesis where God creates man and then he creates woman. Woman is a crown of God's creation. The most excellent thing, the most beautiful thing that God has created is a woman. And then, what happens? The devil comes, and he tempts Eve, and Adam eats, he eats along with his wife, and Adam and Eve are banished from Paradise. (Gen 3.22-24)

And when they are banished from Paradise there are guards—the Cherubim—set at the doors of Paradise, so that Adam and Eve cannot come back in.

Because, God says, if they eat, of the tree of life, they will live forever.

Now, don't misunderstand, its not that God does not want us to live forever, He does want that for us (1 Tim 2.4). He just doesn't want us to live forever in this state of sin that we are in. In this state where we have pain and suffering and sorrow.

Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and this brought corruption and death into the world—remember that—corruption and death are our choice.

He doesn't want that for us. Right? So God cast us out of paradise. And guards are set at

the tree. And so now, the women are coming to the tomb. They say, who will roll away the stone? And also at the tomb are what? The guards of Caesar (Mt 27.65). And they are there guarding the King. Because the king is the tree of life. His body is the fruit of the tree of life. But now, through the resurrection, those guards are removed and we have access to the fruit of the tree...

He is what we partake of so that we can have everlasting life (Jn 6.54). Our Lord is the fruit. And so the women are coming to the tomb.

And remember they're the ones that, partook first. The devil tempted the woman first and she partook first (Gen 3.6). And now they come first. Now they come first. And they come in their faithfulness to anoint the body of the Lord.

So this is a reversal. The Church is always presenting things to us in this way. The Lord is always presenting things to us in this way. The plot of evil is undone. The dissonance is harmonized into the song of creation. So it's the reversal of what's happening in the book of Genesis. Now we have the women coming and receiving the good news. Instead of—you are cast out—now is heard—He is not here, He is risen! (Mk 16.6)

What an amazing, amazing gift. The gift of life. He had to do it this way. To defeat death in the flesh, it had to be this way. There was no creature strong enough to defeat death. Our Divine Lord had to take on a human body to free us from sin.

There is another part to this story—more background of this story and that is that during this time, a woman's word was considered to be nothing really.

But our Lord chooses them to bring the news of the resurrection to his disciples. They are the ones chosen. Women are not second class citizens to the Lord. They are the crown of His creation. They are the last things that he has created. And so he says, You will give this good news to my disciples.

So this is important to remember that. And when we hear in the Gospel, their words seemed like idle tales to the disciples (Lk 24.11), this is what is going on in the background, the word of a woman was not trusted.

But that doesn't matter to our Lord. He's reversing this, He's changing this.

So, all of this is important for what's happening today.

But also we should think today about the faithfulness of these women. They are his faithful followers just like the other disciples during his ministry. They followed him. They helped provide for them out of their means (Lk 8.2-3).

And they left their homes for Him and they were faithful. And His mother was among them.

So the faithfulness of these women is important. They see that their Lord, that our Lord, the Lord is crucified. And, as we hear in the Gospel of Luke, when Luke and Cleopas, are on the road, and Jesus comes and appears to them one of them says, we thought that this would be the One who was going to restore Israel (Lk 24.21)

And so the women are probably having similar thoughts. We thought that this would be the one that would change everything.

Now, you and me, we know the end of the story, right? But they didn't...they're crushed. They're crushed because He's crucified. Right? But, even though they are absolutely crushed, even though they are crushed, they still go because of their great love and faithfulness to the Lord. They don't know what's going to happen, but they do know, they do know that they're faithful to the Lord.

So how, how does that apply to us in our life?

Oftentimes, pain and suffering is difficult, and we spend much of our life trying to run away from that, and get away from that, because it's hard. It's full of suffering this life.

But if we can remain faithful to the Lord, if we can say, like the women of today, if we can say—yes, this is hard, yes, there's a lot of work but I want to walk on this path with You Lord. I want to go to You.

If we can do this then, with that acceptance, our situation, our struggles, our difficulties are transformed into something that strengthens us, something that gives us life, something that gives us hope, right?

Faithfulness is such a great gift but even faithfulness, though, needs to be strengthened by

God. We do have to say, like the Father of the young man—Lord, I believe, help my unbelief (Mk 9.24), help me to be faithful to you.

Help me to continue to follow you in the midst of difficulties, I don't know what the end is going to be.

If we can do that, if we can do that, then we too will be transformed. Faithfulness opens us up to transformation from the inside.

Can you imagine. The women are going to the tomb, weeping, crying, and then they see this angel and an empty tomb! What would that feeling be on the inside? It would be like if we saw one of our loved ones die in front of us, and then they come back. What would that be? Total renewal and restoration.

And yet this is even more than that. Because our Lord's resurrection can transform us and change us—and not just us but the whole world. The resurrection of the Lord transforms us and teaches us to be like Him, when we're faithful to Him.

And then we partake of Him—the fruit of the tree of life—and when we partake of that, then we are able to have everlasting life with our Lord.

So may we, like the myrrh-bearing women, remain faithful to our Lord in the midst of our struggles and difficulties, and experience our own resurrection and transformation. Amen.