

“I Have Seen The Lord”

John 20:1-18

Easter Sunday (April 8th, 2012)

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This is a true story: A four year old was picked up from St. Frances nursery school by his mother. They were on their way to his grandmothers and he wanted to show her the Easter pictures he had colored. She said, David, "When we get to Grams, you will need to be very quiet because Gram has a very bad headache and she can not stand loud noises." He wanted to know if she could die from the headache. His mother was quite shocked and tried to explain that anything was possible but that it was highly improbable, to which David replied that it would be O.K., if she died. His mother was beyond shocked and asked him why it would be O.K. and if he would not miss her if she were to die. His answer was a calm NO, she'll only be gone for **three days** then **she will come back**.

When I heard this story directly from David's grandmother last Sunday after service, I thought she was talking about a four year old boy's innocent faith, but a little later, I realized that she was talking about how deeply her grandson's faith affected her heart when she was ill. While I was preparing my Easter message, this story lingered in my mind this whole week. Today is Easter, Alleluah! We welcome each others sharing the Easter's greetings: "**Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!**" The essence of Easter is to believe that Jesus Christ, the son of God died on the cross, but he rose from the dead in three days! This is a very simple but powerful faith statement. Jesus defeated the power of death and showed us God's love is stronger than the power of death. Look at a four year old boy's faith in action! We want to have this faith this Easter morning.

Let me talk about our understanding of life. Someone defines life in this way; "Life has a beginning and an end. It is just a cycle of starts and stops. It's what being human is all about." But this is not a philosophy that we Christians believe. In our Christian faith, there is no ending, but there is always a new beginning. We don't know what it looks like after we die, but we believe 'everlasting life' in our relationship with God. Recently we have experienced some losses of our loved ones in our congregation. But we know that the death is not our final destination of our lives. Our Christian faith helps us to look beyond the limitations of our eyes to see with our hearts what God sees. There is a lovely hymn called "Hymn of Promise." "In the bud there is a flower, in the seed, an apple tree. In cocoons a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!"

This song invites us to open our eyes and to see beyond the limitations of our eyes to have faith with hope. The death is not the end of our life. Someday, we all meet our loved ones together face to face.

Our Scripture reading reminds us that when Mary Magdalene stood outside by the empty tomb weeping, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. She heard a voice, “Why are you weeping?” Soon, she realized that Jesus was talking to her. With surprise and joy, she ran and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, risen Christ.” The resurrection shows the infinite capability of love. The resurrection was the event of how God’s love is stronger than the power of death. We have no clue how Mary was able to see the risen Jesus, but we are much more inspired by her testimony. “I have seen the Lord” which means “the Lord is still with me.” She was the first person who proclaimed “Jesus is risen!” in the history of Christianity. Faith is like having a new pair of “glasses” that revise our life perspective from weeping to joy, doubt to assurance, from the fear to a sense of safety. Faith guides us to believe the power of God’s love.

I wondered how to explain the power of God’s love to you. I brought this yarn and a scarf. When I dated my wife ten years ago between the United States and South Korea, she knitted this scarf and sent it to me here. This scarf carried over her heart and love in the mail. When I received this, I fully felt her love in this gift. It never went away. This scarf still brings me the warmth of her love. God looks like a knitter. Jesus Christ was the yarn to be used for making a scarf for us. Jesus was willing to give away his life and body as a bundle of threads to warm up our souls. We want to remember this: Even though yarn may be used up for the scarf or clothes, we know that there is yarn in this one. Once we experience the love, it will never go away and it always remains in our hearts. Nothing, even death cannot separate us from this love.

Let us go back to the four year old boy, David’s faith. When his grandmother was ill, and struggled, this four year old boy’s faith gave her comfort and hope. I hope that we have this bold faith and attitude in our life. We are destined to experience separation of loved ones, fear of death, and someday, we may have to say good bye to our loved ones in the journey of life. The Easter story reminds us that there is no ending in our life. In ‘three days’ or someday, we will be back together. If you believe in the power of love, we are not alone. The love of God will keep us together through the yarn of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen.