

While the men were hiding the women came forward to deliver the greatest news that the world has ever received. The news that the tomb is empty and that Jesus Christ is alive.

This week someone made the comment to me that preparing for a birth is a lot more exciting than preparing for a funeral. This person was pointing out that the songs we sing in Advent and our Advent preparations as we move toward Christmas and the birth of Jesus are very different than what we do in Lent as we prepare for the death of Jesus during Holy Week leading into Easter.

It takes a special and faithful person to see and love Jesus when the stench of death is all around. This love of Jesus is what we see in Mary Magdalene and Mary as they approach the tomb after the agonizing death of Jesus on a cross followed by his burial in a tomb.

It was Mary Magdalene and Mary who risk their lives by visiting the grave of a convicted political prisoner when tension was still high. After all, the guards could have turned them in as followers of a movement that the authorities were trying to crush. These are two of the faithful women followers while the men are in hiding being held down by their fear.

So this morning I invite us to celebrate those women in our lives who have been those faithful followers that have brought to us the good news of Jesus Christ. The women who cook the food for families grieving the death of a loved one. The women who send cards of comfort and make phone calls to remind folks in mourning that they are being held up in prayer.

Those women who visit, sit with, and comfort grieving families. Those women who faithfully lift up prayers in support of others as they grieve and feel very much alone. But also those women who demand justice when sons are unlawfully killed.

Those women who serve as elders and deacons and pastors and provide leadership to others during times of sadness and grief. Women who may have been told that because they were women that they should not assume roles in church leadership. Yes, it is during those difficult moments that surround death that the gifts of women can become most evident.

Jim Wallis calls women who show their faith and love of Jesus during these difficult times midwives of hope. Mid-wives of hope. Women who keep hope alive when the stench of death is all around are indeed mid-wives of hope.

And so this morning as the sun rises over the water we can be thankful for these women who have kept this story alive and real for us. Women who through their large and small acts of faith have taught us to accept and live out the story of resurrection.

I invite you to recall these women in your memory this morning. Recall the acts of faithfulness which give witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were told to go out and tell the brothers of what they have seen. Through their witness and the witness of countless other women we can proclaim and accept this morning that Jesus Christ is risen. Jesus Christ is alive. Jesus Christ is alive indeed.

And like those women at the tomb we too have a message to share with others. It is our responsibility as men and women and boys and girls to share this transforming message with brothers and sisters all around.

The message that Jesus Christ is risen. Jesus Christ is risen indeed. AMEN.

PRAYER

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-Text: Matthew 28:1-10

-Given: April 16, 2017 at Easter Sunrise on Lake Wylie, SC