

Go and tell

Matthew 28:1-10

April 20, 2014

The last lie is no lie at all. Jesus is alive. But if Jesus is alive, then none of the rest are lies either.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is near," and it is. It is near in time, coming soon. Now God's sense of "soon" and our sense of "soon" may be two different things, but the kingdom of God is coming, God is coming, soon. The universe is not merely growing old and tired, winding down to some eventual end whether in a bang or a whimper. No, the universe is moving forward, moving not toward an end, but a beginning, a new beginning. The universe itself is pregnant with the kingdom of God!

And kingdom of heaven is near in time and it is near in space. God is near, not far, as close as your own breathing. Because breath comes from God. Breath and blood and water and stone and heat and light and all matter come from God and are filled with God. The kingdom of heaven is near. God is near.

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who acknowledge their own spiritual poverty, and it does. It doesn't belong to saints or spiritual giants or to men and women holier than any of us. The kingdom of heaven, the treasures and joys of intimacy with God our creator and father, belong to you and to me, to any of us who simply admit our poverty, who simply admit our need. God, I need you! God, I need you!

Jesus said that honesty and justice and mercy matter most, and they do. This matters most: not playing games with God or other people or even yourself, but being transparent, being straightforward, telling the truth, loving the truth.

And this matters most: pleasing God, imitating God, by doing what is just, by working to ensure access for all to the bounties, material and spiritual, with which God has blessed this world.

And this matters most: showing mercy. There is nothing more God-like, nothing more like God, than showing mercy.

Jesus healed a man, on the Sabbath, demonstrating that any day is a good day to heal, and it is. There may be a time to work and a time to play, but there is no special time to heal. Whenever the opportunity is there, whenever the need is there, it is a good time to do whatever is in our power to bring comfort and help and healing to those who are sick or sin-sick or lonely or estranged or helpless or hopeless or dying.

And Jesus opened the door. He opened the door wide! Come on in! Come on in and join the feast! Come on in and enjoy my Father's hospitality. Come on in and be filled with every good thing! And it's not a lie. It's true. All are invited. All are welcome. All are loved.

Jesus is alive, and that changes everything. Love is stronger than death. Hope is stronger than despair. Peace is stronger than the mightiest army. Joy is ... Joy is.

Go and tell it! Tell it to your brothers. Tell it to your sisters. Tell it to your neighbors. Tell it to the world! Jesus is alive, and that changes everything.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of believing it. Don't be afraid of joy. Jesus came to bring joy, to plant his own joy in us, so that our joy may be complete. Can he do it? He already has.

See it! Hear it! Believe it! ... Jesus is alive!

Sing it! Dance it! Live it! ... Jesus is alive!