

Come Together: Mourning is Broken
John 20:1-18, Revelation 21:1-5a April 24, 2011
EASTER

Revelation 21:1-5a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth;
for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the
sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of
heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

God will dwell with them as their God;

they will be God's peoples, and God will be with them;

wiping every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things
have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said,

"See, I am making all things new."

- I. We've finally got it together folks; yes we do, because
MOURNING IS BROKEN.
 - A. During Lent we have been looking at how we come together as spiritual beings; looking at the various stages of our development as we matured.
 - B. We first pre-consciously experience God as an indistinct presence as we swam in the womb of God.
 - C. Then as a young child we experienced God as Holy Other, which gave rise to our trying to mold concrete images of God as an older child and then the idol smashing stage of adolescence when we begin to experience the mysterious love.
 - D. As we mature we begin to see ourselves as co-workers with God who is designer and the inspiration for the co-building of God's Realm.
 - E. As we reach our wiser years we begin to most profoundly embrace God as redeemer, the one who helps us create positive meaning in our life.

- F. Today we finally celebrate the completion of our journey as we find ourselves totally fulfilled as spiritual beings, totally at one with God, a return to the womb of God in what the church calls “the resurrection.”
 - G. We finally have it together as mourning is broken, grief is past, sadness has ended, there are tears no more.
- II. So what’s this final stage like; our completion as spiritual beings, our resurrection, our eternal life with God?
- A. Well we know it’s not what they thought a couple thousand years ago; that is a life just like this one, but up in the heavens – up in the sky.
We know now that up there, there’s just more stars and galaxies and black holes who knows what else;
but not a heavenly kingdom.
 - B. Nope, I Can Only Imagine
 1. To steal the title from a MercyMe song, “I Can Only Imagine.”
 2. The lyrics to the song state:
I can only imagine What it will be like
When I walk By your side

I can only imagine What my eyes will see
When your face Is before me
I can only imagine

Surrounded by Your glory,
what will my heart feel
Will I dance for you Jesus
or in awe of you be still
Will I stand in your presence
or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah,
will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine

I can only imagine When that day comes
And I find myself Standing in the Son

I can only imagine When all I will do
Is forever Forever worship You
I can only imagine

3. But of course, the reality is, we have no idea what the reality is.

III. We can't even imagine.

- A. In our Lenten study on the 2nd and 3rd century Christianities we found that even way back then one of the major debates was whether the Resurrection, that is Jesus

Resurrection and our resurrection, is a bodily or a spiritual resurrection.

- B. But you know, the whole idea of a physical body is **so** 19th century.
1. It's not just out-of-fashion, it really just shouldn't be meaningful to us anymore, at least not the way it was then;
which was pretty much the same way it was viewed for thousands of years before that.
 2. If you've been keeping up at all with particle physics and string theory, I'm sure you're all well aware that at levels smaller than the atom, smaller than the particles that make up the atom, we find that, most likely, reality is composed of bits of non-material energized information. – vibrating strings.
- C. Now if I was going to try to give a definition of 'spirit,' well, -- "a matrix of non-material energized bits of information" does pretty good.
We are spirit.
The old body/spirit argument is moot, it's meaningless; the body **is** spirit.
- D. To argue for a **bodily** resurrection is to return to a pre-20th century dualism that no longer holds up to scientific evidence.

- E. So to get back to the resurrection and our final stage of becoming, coming together; when I try to imagine what it will be like when this unique matrix of vibrating stings I call myself transforms back into the womb of God in what we call the resurrection – well – it is so far beyond my ability to imagin, that the whole notion of trying to imagine it is useless.
- F. It's not as the song says,
"I Can only Imagine;"
rather it's "I Can't **Even** Imagine."

IV. But there are a couple of things I don't have to imagine; there are a couple of things that are assured by my faith in Jesus.

- A. Number One – God is Loving
- B. Number Two – There is eternal life with God.

V. Yes! God is loving

- A. In the face of all that is evil in the world and all that stands in the way of love; the primary force in the cosmos is love.

1. Of the forces that generate our lives and world; gravity, electromagnetism, the weak and strong nuclear forces;
the strongest force is the force that brings all that there is into being and brings things into the mutually enhancing relationships that over the eons have given us this world and our very own consciousness of this life;
that is the force of love.
2. It is the hand that plucks the strings and makes them vibrate.
3. God is the great musician, playing those stings, those vibrating stings that lie at foundation of all that is, in a symphony of love;
a symphony that gives us life and love.

B. There's another way of getting at this and that is to ask yourself this question; "What is it in your life that is truly worthy of worship?"

"What is it in your life that really makes it all worth living?"

"What is your ultimate concern?"

1. Without love, nation or state have no value.
2. Without love, family is meaningless.
3. Without love, what good is freedom?
4. Without love, what good is life?

5. Love is your ultimate concern and God is love.

C. There are a lot of pretenders to the throne who try to convince you that they are of more concern than Love, than God; but they are not.

1. Not nation.

2. Not money

3. Not even life itself.

D. What **is of ultimate concern to us are not the material things, but rather the things of the spirit; -- love.**

VI. So let's see about the second thing that my faith in Jesus assures me of; namely eternal life with God.

A. How do I know that you and I will have eternal life with God?

**B. Because – “Here’s lookin’ at you.”
I am here, looking at you.**

1. Your eternal life with God doesn't begin when you die.

Your eternal life with God began when you were conceived.

2. And dying doesn't happen just once, it happens in every moment of your life as you pass away into the past, and a new you is born into a new moment.
The 'you' that was here moments ago, is not the 'you' that is here now.
That "you" from a moment ago has passed away – it's dead;
or more optimistic sounding – it's become eternal in the life of God.
3. However, there will come a time when that unique matrix of vibrating bits of information that I call myself will make its final transformation into life with God.

C. That final transformation is what we call the resurrection.

VII. Of course you are aware that I can't tell you a whole lot about what it will be like after that transformation, after the resurrection;
but I can tell what eternal life is like;
because you're living it right now.

- A. As Jesus said, "The realm of God is at hand."
It's here and now.
This is heaven.
This is where God is living with us mortals.

- B. You are one with God right now.
- C. The question for us is;
are we living a life worthy of being one with
God?
- D. No.
No we're not.
Don't even begin to fool yourself.
- E. That's why God, the Christ, is redeeming our
lives right now in every moment as we pass
away into the past and are born anew into
the present.
- F. No. We're not living a life worthy of God.
But out of love, out of a loving response to
the love that conceives us, sustains us and
redeems us, we really need to **try** to live a
life that is worthy.
- G. Not out of fear of punishment for being
unworthy;
but out of gratitude, out of love in response
to Love itself.

VIII. The resurrection is about that final transformation but it is also about the redemption that takes place in every moment of our lives.

- A. The resurrection is not just something that happened 2 thousand years ago; it's not something that happens just at our final transformation; it is something that is happening right here and now.

- B. Celebrate it. Manifest it. Become it.
God is making all things new.
The Realm of God is at hand.
AMEN.