

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

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“Remember how he told you...” (Luke 24:6)

In today’s gospel reading, it’s clear that the women and those who the women told had all forgotten what Jesus had said. After all, remembering that their friend and teacher predicted that he would suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise in three days is a traumatic memory that I would want to forget. Or maybe they thought Jesus was being melodramatic and didn’t take him seriously. Or maybe they forgot because they had been drinking a bit too much that night. Who knows? What we know is that the women didn’t immediately remember Jesus’s words and most of those they told didn’t ever seem to remember.

Now, it’s important for us to know that the word “remembering” found here in the original Greek is *not* the same as simply remembering a past situation. It’s not simply recalling a story, like when your sibling sneezed as a baby and found their face literally in the cake.

Rather, their remembering was the type of remembering that causes a transformation. It’s remembering that causes us to have a whole new outlook on life. It’s the remembering that allows the “pieces of the puzzle” to fall into place. It is the kind of remembering of your father’s actions that has helped you realize that he probably had a mental health disorder. It’s remembering how you didn’t have attractions like other girls and that is probably because you’re queer. It’s

remembering how you regularly moved homes growing up and how it probably contributes to your hatred of change. This kind of remembering changes how life is lived. Because, now with that remembering, you can better understand how your father treated you. It's the remembering that helps you develop a healthy identity as a queer individual. It's the remembering that allows you to become more self-aware and present. You see, the women at the tomb had that kind of remembering.

With their remembering, they weren't going back. They were going forward. They were transformed. In their remembering, it opened them up to new life. For those women on that first Easter, they were able to see the presence of Christ in the absence of Jesus's body. They were able to remember that God keeps God's promises. They were able to take their remembering and turn it into responding.

And throughout Luke's gospel Jesus's ministry was rooted in transformation. It was rooted in memory. Back in the beginning, Jesus launched his ministry by urging those gathered to remember the words of Isaiah. To remember that God's mission is to bring about transformation. To bring good news to the poor, to free those imprisoned, and to form a new community of faith.

As Jesus went on with his ministry, he lived out this transformed life. After all, remember that Jesus welcomed the outsiders, the sick, and the sellouts. Remember that Jesus rejected religious hypocrisy. Remember how Jesus preached justice for all, especially those on the margins. Remember how peace and servant leadership became pillars of his movement. Remember how generosity and forgiveness shaped Jesus's community. Remember how love was the focal point of Jesus's vision.

But, also remember, that God's presence could not be locked into a tomb and is not limited to 2,000 years ago. Today we remember. We remember that Christ is present in the organizer and the activist seeking justice. We remember that Christ is present in the neighbor who welcomes the outsider, the refugee, the immigrant, and those who think, talk, act, and look different. Remember that Christ is often found in unexpected people and unexpected places. Remember the queer Christ, the child Christ, the widow Christ, the homebound Christ. Remember the Jewish Christ and the Muslim Christ. Remember the Christ next to you, and the Christ present

in Ukraine. Remember Christ living among the Russians and the Chinese. Remember how Christ is present in love shared, peace cultivated, and community gathered. Remember.

Friends, today's gospel is about remembering. It's about remembering so that we can live transformed lives. That we can be freed from damaging theology that is removed from justice, love, and peace. It's about remembering the true Easter story. Remember those prophetic women who went and shared with the disciples. Remember how Jesus continued God's vision, and how Christ lives on among us. Remember that you are loved. Friends, remember that Christ is risen! Alleluia! Amen.