

The Resurrection of Our Lord
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Sermon by The Rev Timothy A Leitzke

They say a watched pot never boils. I agree. I measure out the water. I put in some salt. I turn the dial on the stove to LITE and hear the gas hiss and the lighter flick and flick and finally catch with a demure rumble like wind in a sail. I set it on HIGH and wait. If there are other dishes I am going to need I get those and then check. There might be a couple of little bubbles but still it's just hot water. It is only when I leave the kitchen that the water boils. It's such a little difference between boiling and simply hot, but it's all the difference in the world between liquid water and steam. It's a minute change, the smallest alteration in temperature, passing in the blink of an eye. That's kind of like what happens here. Mark doesn't even bother to describe the rolling of the stone or to name its roller. The act was so minor that no one even noticed it until the morning when Mary, Mary, and Salome showed up. Such a little, tiny detail—such a little, unnoticed act and now HE'S OUT!

I remember one dark, winter morning at my parents' house in West Virginia I went from the kitchen into the garage. On the back of the garage there's a heavy door that opens onto the back deck. I felt a chill when I stepped into the garage, and then I saw the back door wide open onto our back yard. Anybody could have gotten in; anyone could still be in the garage, or even in the house. Friends of Christ the joy of the resurrection borders on that kind of terror. The door was opened. Jesus the Christ is on the loose. He was supposed to be dead.

We know he's dead. Dozens of people saw him die. They buried him, and now he's on the loose!

With pots and doors I'm very close to that unforgivable sin of mixing my metaphors, and all metaphors eventually collapse. With the boiling pot the water warmed and warmed, building to the point when it would become steam. It's difficult today honestly to say that all history was building to Christ's resurrection, that all life before it was futile and that all life now is perfect. It's convenient for us to say that, what with us living after the fact, but we're foolish to assume it. In many ways, the world remains the same. The three women come to anoint Jesus for burial, even though he was already anointed in the Passion reading last week. The young man tells them emphatically not to be overly impressed with the resurrection but to go meet Jesus out in the world, but the women flee in shivering terror and don't tell a soul what they have seen. Creation is still broken. People are still sinful. The world is still the same, and yet the world will never be the same.

Friends of Christ, our experience of the resurrection changes everything. Christ is on the loose! God is at large in the world. God is on the run, free and unfettered. The resurrection stands the whole universe on its head. All the evil—the evil we have done intentionally and the evil we have done while trying to do good—is overlooked. Death: a simple fact of life, couldn't hold God.

This is the end of the Gospel According to St Mark, and this is no ending at all. There are too many loose ends. Who's the guy in the white stole? How did Mark, or anyone else, know anything about the resurrection if the three women

never told anyone about it? Where's Jesus the Christ now? Friends, Christ lives and the Gospel lives. There is no satisfying ending to this story because it is a work in progress, and we are the latest batch of characters. The resurrection enables us to live our part of the story with hope. The crucifixion was not the end. God triumphs in death and God triumphs *over* death. Jesus Christ is risen today, and through him God makes all things new.

Now, Friends of Christ, in faith we live with the water boiling over. We are physically changed because we know that God is making us new and forgiving our sins, and that we will one day join Christ as resurrected people. The change in us is far more profound than a shift from liquid to gas. God has claimed us and planted the Spirit in us. In faith we live as God's people. We can follow God's commandments. We can love God and our neighbors. We can gather here in community. In faith I can say that God is alive and at work inside of each of you. There won't be a nice resolution to everything; our story is still being written. The water is boiled and steam is flowing every which way. The future is unknown but we live now in faith.

Now, Friends of Christ, in faith we live with an open door. Doors control access to us, and our door is always open. We are no longer caged; God has freed us. We can follow God any time or any where. On the other hand, God is no longer caged. The bars that keep God at bay are useless and God can meet us any time or any where. We can shut the door and throw the deadbolt; God will open it again with such subtlety that we don't even see it happen. We'll never keep the

door closed. There won't be a nice resolution to everything. The door is open and God gets into us all the time. What God will bring through the door to us is unknown, but we live now in faith.

Friends of Christ, none of this is our doing. We can't do it. We all have limits. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God, but, Friends of Christ, God is on a mission to love and redeem and forgive each of us, and nothing can stop God. Humans killed Jesus, but God seized him into God's own hands for God's purposes. The women came to anoint Jesus but God had already anointed him. People rolled the stone over the tomb, but God has rolled away the stone. People still don't comprehend but God speaks through the mouths of people, telling the good news that Jesus the Christ is out! He could be anywhere, running riot in the streets or praying by someone sick, shouting from the rooftops or whispering in the night, presiding at this meal or sitting at your kitchen table. Christ is on the loose!

Amen