

**Sermon: Midwife the Resurrection**  
**Easter Sunrise Service and 10am Service**  
**April 4, 2021**  
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It was only the women disciples who remained with Jesus throughout the whole terrible ordeal of the crucifixion on Friday. They were the ones who apparently gave the account of the crucifixion to those who wrote out the gospels, for they were the only one's there. The male disciples were nowhere to be found since Thursday night when Jesus was arrested. They were terrified and went who knows where?! The women though were there through to the bitter end, watching and waiting through Jesus' agonizing defeat until he eventually took his last breath. And even then when Joseph of Arimathea had Jesus laid in his family's tomb and rolled the rock across the entrance, the gospels say Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat there opposite the tomb in the awful stillness of that day. It doesn't say how long they stayed but at some point they decided to return to where they were staying in Jerusalem and gather some wraps and spices to tend Jesus' body, as was the custom, and so when they returned the morning of the third day - still the other disciples no where to be seen - they discovered the tomb empty! One account says they encountered an angel there another account that it was the resurrected Jesus himself that they met then but either way they were told to bring word to all the disciples to go to Galilee and there they would see Him again.

There are those who say it's evidence of the veracity of the account, that the only reason the male gospel writers would have written that the women were the ones to remain and witness it all and be the first to encounter the resurrected Christ, was because it actually happened that way. Never in that patriarchal

culture would they have made up such a story for the founding narrative of their faith; their utter failure and the whole thing riding on the witness of a few women at least one of them of questionable repute.

But it's beautifully fitting and only appropriate that the women were there to the very end as witness because as the early Christians were grappling with how to describe and explain the great mystery of what happened on Easter morning, they would eventually come to use the imagery of birth, that in Jesus' resurrection what happened was a birthing of a new creation through him... and who better to endure and witness the birth pangs of Jesus' suffering and death and to usher in this new life than women who knew in their own bodies how to hold the pain of birth. Who better would know intuitively how to be mid-wives to a new creation. As is often the case, at least I'll confess it was in Tracy and my birthing experience of our 3 girls, the men in the scenario were just traumatized by the pain and mess of it all and basically useless... the women must bear it and deliver it and this was the case for how Jesus entered the world at Christmas and also for his journey out of the world through his suffering, death and then rebirth at the Resurrection. Both moments, the incarnation and the resurrection, had to be mid-wifed into being.

And isn't that a remarkable thing to contemplate. We proclaim in this mystery of faith that this is THE pivotal moment in human history, maybe earth's history, maybe the universe's history even, when God entered into the warp and weft of our existence and opened a new trajectory or a new reality no longer marred by the weight and strain of sin and fear and hate and violence and decay and death, all those things that we somehow know are not the way it's all supposed to be, and in Jesus Christ a new creation free of all that is finally birthed.

And maybe even more astounding is that the way God drew forth this new creation into being was for it to be mid-wifed, delivered by, people still under the persuasion and influence of the old creation. You might even reasonably say to God, this was not a great idea. “Let us tell you, 2000 years later God, this was not the best of plans cause all those things, sin and fear and hate, death and decay they’re all still here. Maybe you should have sent your angels to do the work of mid-wifing this new creation into being cause we have made a mess of it... or at least loooooongggggg work of it!”

But I guess we should give God the benefit of the doubt, that They knew what they were doing, The Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost, they know what they are doing. This wasn’t a supernatural event that merely exploded on the scene with a great battle or a to great fanfare from the heavens to fix everything in sight that needed fixing, end of story. But this was a single man, Jesus of Nazareth, who at a single point in time surrounded by a motley cast of characters returned from the grave to inaugurate a new creation and He asked a bunch of resolute women and a bunch of cowardly men to help deliver it into being, to let others know that something heretofore unheard of had happened, is happening and will unfold from here towards God’s beautiful and perfect ends. And so the women ran to tell. And the men ran back to the empty tomb to confirm. And they all caught a glimpse of the resurrected Jesus Christ and knew that somehow this meant everything had changed and would change and that they would have to do their best to mid-wife that change into greater and greater and fuller and fuller reality.

And down through the ages to this day of days the story is told and the expectation remains that we, you and I, must mid-wife the resurrection into

existence; by how?! You ask! Well, in the face of the old creation, of old reality, that still holds sway to some extent we witness to and hold forth the reality of the the new creation. And Jesus explained many times what that looked like. In the face of sin and offense, we are to offer forgiveness. That's mid-wifing the resurrection into being. And in the face of debilitating fear and anxiety, we are to lean into our trust in God as our only strength and our only salvation and that will be mid-wifing the resurrection into being. And where there is hatred and violence, we are to offer love and justice even at the expense of ourselves. That's how we birth this new creation. And where there is decay and death, we are to remember and speak about and hold forth hope for renewed and renewing life, proclaiming that the last word in this world is not death but life... and that's how we mid-wife the resurrection of Jesus Christ more fully into being... until that day when the fresh beautiful gurgling joyful little new creation is lifted up in God's loving hands and complete, world without end, amen, amen!