

Sermon: Listening For Easter**Scripture: John 20:1-18****Preacher: Rev. Will Burhans****Date: April 5, 2026**

Listen.

Do you hear that? Do you hear the quiet? Do you hear how for this moment you are not being bombarded with data and information and images and opinions and noise and... Doesn't that feel good? It's like a momentary little massage of the spirit, isn't it? Listen.

It's a spiritual discipline, listening is, and it's how we come to Easter. Listening. When he was with them Jesus was often telling his disciples to listen - "those who have ears to hear, listen," he would say. And at times he'd get frustrated that the disciples weren't listening: "I have been with you all this time and you still aren't hearing me?" About 7 weeks ago, before we placed ashes on our foreheads for the start of Lent we came to the story of Jesus aflame and transfigured on the mountain top with Moses and Elijah, a prefiguring of the resurrection that we celebrate today, a sort of promise that despite the hard times to come in the end all would be well. And the voice from heaven on that mountaintop says what to the disciples who are terrified? "This is my beloved son LISTEN to him." That's their instruction from the voice of God. Listen to Him.

And they try to but they don't do a great job of it, even those closest to Jesus have trouble really hearing what he's saying. As He approaches Jerusalem and his impending passion and death, he begins to warn his disciples point blank, telling them that he is going to suffer and die and somehow the disciples do not, will not, cannot listen to him. They refuse to hear what he is saying because it is not what they want to hear. The

Messiah should be starting a revolution against Rome! He should be gathering the faithful into an army. He should be vindicating Israel and putting His enemies underfoot. But he tells them he is actually going to suffer and he is going to die. They cannot hear it.

“This is not what the Messiah is supposed to do. This is failure. This is tragedy, disaster. He going off to be defeated? There’s no way that this is the course of the Messiah come to save us.” And even today 2000 years later over all these years of remembering and rehearsing this story we are still barely listening to what his teaching, his life, his passion and death say to us.

To live we must be willing to die.

Privilege is found in privileging others.

Wisdom’s way is the way of humility, turning the other cheek, going the extra mile.

Respond to hate with love and forgiveness.

And to what he’s been saying all along, we still aren’t listening very well. In the highest offices of our land there’s this macho flexing of muscle and an insistence that might makes right, there’s great pride in the violence we can do, even doing so in the name of Jesus, the crucified one who was executed and came back not to crucify others but to forgive.

Are we listening?

I think it’s one of the great spiritual tasks of our day, to listen, especially now because there is SO much vying to be heard, so much effort, billions of dollars actually, poured into claiming our attention, a cacophony of voices all of which have their designs on us, shaming us into buying something more, spiking our indignation and outrage, escalating our appetites for what never really satisfies. But behind it all, in the silence

behind it all, there is another voice, the true voice of the One who created us out of love and wants nothing more but our true flourishing. It's the Spirit of the Resurrected Christ who is saturate this world and speaking words of mercy, love and peace into it. But as insistent as it is, it's also quiet to our ears, speaking in subtler tones than the loud mouths that dominate the airwaves. So we have to be all ears to hear it, we have to be intentionally listening for the voice of the One who has overcome hate and death with love and life. That's the voice, the song at the heart of creation, the promise proclaimed at Easter that despite all appearances to the contrary hate and death are overcome and are being overcome by love and life. Can you hear that Spirit whispering in tones of love in this world?

We have to listen for it.

Listen for the risen Christ and the world He is ushering in and throw into the tomb your weapons of violence and war and douse the flames of your own hatred and anger, such energy will never carry us into a new day.

Listen for the risen Christ and the world he is ushering in and do not bend your knee to rulers who rise with iron fists and dark lies, they will not have the final say, theirs is the doom they seem to be bringing upon us.

Listen for the risen Christ and the world He is ushering in and tend to the weary, the sick, the broken and the dying, those our manicured hero-worshipping culture wants to cast away and deny but now, the least, the last, the lost are the new priority.

Listen for the risen Christ and the world He is ushering in and let it call out your truest self, you know that true part of you that doesn't need your gain to come at the expense of others, that really doesn't need anything more than you already have, that expects the best not the worst of the people around you, that hopes in what is to come and does not despair.

Listen for the risen Christ and the world He is ushering in and note who the true heroes and superstars and luminaries are, the ones who are sacrificing themselves for what is better, the ones doing the work of healing, the ones prioritizing heart over brawn cause they understand what true strength in this world is for whether they are Christian or not, they are the ones attuned to the resurrected Christ and the world He is ushering in They are listening to him.

Listen to them.

Listen for the risen Christ and the world he is ushering in.

Can you hear it?

Listen.