

The Magdalene's Blessing

You hardly imagined
standing here,
everything you ever loved
suddenly returned to you
looking you in the eye
and calling your name.

And now
you do not know
how to abide this ache
in the center
of your chest
where a door
slams shut
and swings open
at the same time,
turning on the hinge
of your aching
and hopeful heart.

I tell you
this is not a banishment
from the garden.

This is an invitation,
a choice,
a threshold,
a gate.

This is your life
calling to you
from a place
you could never
have dreamed
but now that you

have glimpsed its edge
you cannot imagine
choosing any other way.

So let the tears come
as anointing,
as consecration,
and then
let them go.

Let this blessing
gather itself around you.

Let it give you
what you will need
for this journey.

You will not remember
the words—
they do not matter.

All you need to remember
is how it sounded
when you stood
in the place of death
and heard the living
call your name.

By Jan Richardson

“The Risen Christ is Waiting for You”

April 20th, 2025 — Selby United Church — Scripture Luke 24:1-12

By Tricia Cammaart

The women and disciples are in disbelief
of God's plan faith.

Today is a glorious day for us! Jesus has
risen! We see joy, happiness, newness and
a promise of life everlasting!

But what about the first women who went
to see Jesus in the tomb? Do you think
when they were at the tomb to see it
empty did they jump for joy? Were they
happy? They look in the tomb, and see
nothing, no Lord Jesus.

Then “2 men in clothes that gleamed like
lightning stood beside them”. I am sure
the appearance of 2 gleaming men did not
invoke joy to these women either. No,
they were frightened by the young
gleaming men, “in their fright the women
bowed down with their faces to the
ground” The women were confused as to
where Jesus was. Terrified, confused, in
wonderment and perhaps disbelief -
maybe asking themselves is this my life, is
this even happening? But the gleaming
men tell the women “Remember how he
told you when you were with him in
Galilee”. Oh yes now we remember.

Then the women told the disciples. The
disciples say, “their words seemed to them
like nonsense” Even Peter runs to the
tomb and he is left with wonderment.

We can only imagine how much pain and
suffering the women, the disciples were in
from losing Jesus. They were mourning
the traumatic loss of a friend, a teacher, a
brother, a son, a King, a
Saviour. Experiencing so much pain and
grief and how can there not be disbelief
after what Jesus had suffered.

And let's be honest, the disciples never
listened to Jesus, he would tell them again
and again and again, but they never got it
or wanted to believe and accept it that he
would die and be resurrected. It is written
In the 3 gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke
- Jesus tells his disciples on 3 separate
occasions about his destiny. Jesus told
them that his Father had a plan for him
and for his people. Jesus wanted the
disciples to have faith, just like when he
walked on water. They will be done.

And so the disciples did not jump for joy at
this good news that Jesus was not there
because they were in disbelief and
wonderment.

This is what we might call HARD GOOD
NEWS for the women and disciples. They
must first experience tragedy, grief and
great loss before they receive God's good
news.

We ourselves have trials and tribulations and sometimes do not have faith in God's path for us.

Our life today is not all sunshine and rainbows, is it? We often stand, like the women and disciples, with our mouths hanging wide open in disbelief at our life. Throughout our lives we may often ask the questions "is this really my life"? Just like Jesus, and just like the women and the disciples, we must go through hard times, suffering, tragedy, disaster, addiction, sadness, grief and great loss in our time here on earth. We cannot bypass it to get eternal life.

We expect that having faith in God and God's power will give us miracles and give us an easy life. As Christians we pray, we go to church, we live like Jesus as best we can and in return we expect an easy life. But we know this is not true, as Christians we enter into sadness, weakness, suffering and loss. And every time we do, we ask "is this really my life" "why me".

The gospel says that we are ready to understand God's love when we are ready to enter our own story of weakness, suffering and loss. In John 16:33 says "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world"

When we enter hard times we are left trembling, fearful, full of wonderment and disbelief just like the women and the disciples. And so you may find yourself looking into an empty tomb and asking "now what"?

For the woman and the disciples on the other side of the pain and disbelief is Jesus!

And staring at the empty tomb, the women ask "now what". Their mission is to go and tell the disciples and to meet in Galilee, Jesus is gone ahead of them into Galilee, there they will see him. There they will find Christ.

The disciples are told that in going where they are sent, they will meet the risen Christ. So they gather in Galilee, waiting and hoping that they might walk with Christ in the newness of life on the other side of the grave. And they did meet Christ, but with fear, and troubled hearts, with doubts. They accepted the HARD GOOD NEWS. They have never lived in this new world of a resurrected king. While emotions may be still dark and painful, newness, joy and amazement enters their soul as Jesus "opens their minds".

For us, on the other side of the pain, suffering, tragedy and disbelief is Jesus.

And so we ask ourselves "now what", what is our mission upon knowing the tomb is empty and Christ has been resurrected?

Sometimes our own missions in life are like meeting the resurrected Christ who has gone ahead of us into the place where we need him, just like the women and disciples went ahead in Galilee.

When we experience hard times, suffering, tragedy, disaster, addiction, grief and great loss, we also know that Christ has gone ahead of us into the place where we need him. He is there for us. This is our HARD GOOD NEWS.

Know that when you enter into sadness, weakness, suffering and loss. And you ask yourself "is this really my life" "why me". For us to follow Jesus' example is to suffer as he suffered, feel weak as he felt weak, feel sadness as he felt sadness. But the HARD GOOD NEWS, God is at work restoring, making new, healing, leading you into a **new world**. While you may tremble with fear of what is happening and what lies ahead, know that **Christ has already gone ahead of you** and is waiting for you with open arms. Maybe when you thought your door was closed, like the tomb was closed, your door will open and you will **now** recognize God's messenger. And the messenger will say "do not be afraid". I know it's hard to not be afraid, but we only fear because we have not lived this new life on the other side. But with Christ there is new life on the other side of suffering, new life on the other side of tragedy, new life on the other side of great loss, new life on the other side of forgiveness, new life on the other side of healing.