

## Resurrection Hope

By: Meagan McLaughlin

November 6, 2022. We who grieve on this All Saints' Day, who feel overwhelmed by the beasts and brokenness of this world, can rest in the promise of resurrection.

Readings: [Daniel 7:1-3, 15-18](#), [Ephesians 1:11-23](#)

\*\*\* Transcript \*\*\*

Two years ago my family gathered, in an outdoor space to be safe in COVID despite late fall weather in Minnesota, to lay my Aunt Kate to rest. We raged at the disease that had so tragically taken her body, and her mind, and eventually her life. We celebrated her life, claimed hope in the resurrection, and at the same time, we grieved her loss, and wondered together why it had to be this way, and what to do with her gone from our day-to-day lives. In those moments of grief, claiming the resurrection can feel a bit like watching a garden bed of dry earth and brown remnants of perennials in the early spring, hoping against hope that new life will come, eventually, but not quite believing that it will be possible. Those who have had this experience have perhaps also taken comfort in knowing that Jesus grieved too, weeping at the death of his friend Lazarus.

The Ephesians, and many of the other communities that Paul was writing to in his letters, certainly knew death. The Ephesians may not have known Jesus personally, but his life and death impacted them profoundly. They believed in the promise of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. And we know from Paul's letters that they expected Jesus to come back, in their lifetimes, to fulfill the mission and promises that he made while he lived and taught and healed.

But his return had been delayed. In many of Paul's letters, he is addressing people who are still trying to figure out what Jesus' promise of life means when they haven't seen it yet. When people around them, faithful, good people, are still dying. When their own lives are threatened by the Roman soldiers. When resurrection doesn't seem to be happening from anything they are experiencing.

Today we celebrate All Saints' Day together, as a community, many of us in the sanctuary, and some on Zoom. And it is so good to be together, to celebrate the communion of saints, to remember those who have died. We take time this morning to acknowledge the reality of loss and grief, and in the face of that reality we claim, in this time, in this place, the promise of the resurrection that we profess every week in the Apostle's Creed. We wait together, as the Ephesians did, in the space between the now, and the not yet.

Like the Ephesians, and all peoples who have come before us, we know death. We know the brokenness of this world that comes in so many forms, the powers that Daniel describes as the beasts. Injustices, illness, violence, abuse, and the internal beasts, too — anger, resentment, anxiety, self-judgement... and the reality of death and grief that can overwhelm all of us. All the beasts of this world that can hold onto us, weighing us down, creating the illusion that their power is absolute.

And we know, as we hear the stories, that God is bigger than all of that. God, Daniel proclaims, overcomes the beasts. The kingdom of God, Daniel's vision reveals, will not be overcome, no

matter what beasts may threaten it. We come together because we can't do this alone. Even Daniel needed the encouragement and clarity of a witness to help him understand the hope of his vision. None of the brokenness and pain of this world surprises God, and God can handle all of it. And The Holy Ones of God — not the perfect or the pious, but all of God's beloved, all of us, and all of those who have gone before us and all of us who are called God's children — will possess that kingdom forever.

And the promise we know in Christ, the promise of our baptisms, is that God can even overcome death. Death will not have the final word. God shows up and breathes in life, just when we least expect it. Debie Thomas, in her blog *Journey with Jesus*, writes, "Resurrection means living in circumstances that should render living impossible. Resurrection means enduring, overcoming, persisting, and surviving." Just like new growth always, finally, emerges from garden beds that look as if they will never live again, resurrection often happens when we have no hope left.

We who grieve today, who feel overwhelmed by the beasts and brokenness of this world, can rest in the promise of resurrection. We come together as people of faith, because the promise is for all of us children of God, and just like Daniel, we can see that better as a community. We remember with gratitude our communion of saints, those who have died whose lives touched us in profound ways. And with our saints, we claim the promise of Jesus' resurrection, and we watch in hope for new life, even when it seems slow in coming.

Paul reminds us that we, and all of those who have gone before us, are beloved children of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit. And we receive his blessing today: "I pray that you may have wisdom in the Holy Spirit, that you may know the hope that you have." Family of Christ Lutheran, as we in a moment name and remember our beloveds who have died, our hope is in Jesus. And because of that, resurrection is real, even and especially in the face of death.

Thanks be to God.

\*\*\* Keywords \*\*\*

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