

Back To The Future

On Sunday, we completed our series called “Voices of Angels” by focusing on the single most dramatic angelic appearance of all time.

1. Warm-up Question: Jeff began Sunday’s sermon by describing the idyllic house where he grew up in Action, Indiana. Tell us about the house where you grew up.
2. Read Luke 23:44-56. The women referred to in this passage are later identified as “Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them.” Luke 24:10. These women watched Jesus die. Have you ever had to watch someone die? How did it affect you? How do you think watching Jesus die affected these women?
3. Read Luke 24:1-12.
 - a. Why are we so drawn to the final resting place of our loved ones?
 - b. Jeff imagined the conversation of the women on their way to the tomb that morning. If you had traveled with Jesus for many months, seen his deeds, and witnessed his death, what do you imagine you would have wanted to talk about on the way to his tomb?
 - c. Imagine yourself there in the moment when the women found the tomb open and the body missing. Suppose you went to visit the grave of a loved one, but found the grave opened and the body missing. How would you feel?
 - d. Imagine yourself there when angels appeared and said, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” Luke 24:5. Suppose you went to visit the grave of a loved one and had the same angelic encounter. How would you react?
4. Jeff suggested two key lessons we can learn from the message of the angels in Luke 24. **Lesson 1: In the words of the well-known Easter hymn, “I serve a risen Savior, he’s in the world today.”** In other words, no longer confined to a human body, the Risen Christ became omnipresent, so that now his Spirit is with us wherever we go.
 - a. Several years ago, the local newspaper in Spencer, Indiana, told the story of a little girl in a car accident. The vehicle ran off the road and tumbled down a steep 75 foot embankment. Though bloodied and dazed, she climbed through the brush up the embankment to seek help from passersby. Afterward, when asked how she had the poise and strength to do that, she said, “My Jesus was there. He held my hand all the way up. He stayed there with me. He said people were coming to help right away, and that he was going back to Heaven to take care of the babies there and my kitty cat.” When asked how she knew it was Jesus, she said, “I saw him and knew him. I knew my Jesus’ face.” (Question continued next page.)

What do you make of that story? Do you believe it happened that way? If so, what are the implications for us in our daily lives?

- b. Read Matthew 10:28-30. One of our congregants, Theresa Mull, tells about a really tough time when her spouse left her, she faced severe financial stress and possible loss of her home, and her job became overwhelming. During that struggle, when walking out of a Target one day, she saw a beautiful sunset, lots of chirping sparrows, and heard a voice say, “I love you more than these.” Tell us about a time in your life when you powerfully experienced a divine presence, i.e., the Risen Christ, with you.
 - c. In Matthew 28:20, right before his Ascension to heaven, Jesus’ last words were, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Suppose a child were to ask you to explain what that promise means. How would you explain it?
 - d. From day to day, do you find yourself expecting and looking for the presence of the Risen Christ in your life? What form does this take for you?
5. Once again, recall the key words the angels spoke to the women, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” Luke 24:5. **Lesson 2: If you’re looking for Jesus where you last encountered him, you won’t find him there. Jesus goes ahead of us, not behind us. So don’t get stuck longing for the past, boldly follow Jesus into whatever is next in your future.**

- a. By returning to the tomb, the women were going back to what they knew and loved, trying to salvage as much as possible of what had been. We tend to do the same thing. We tend to get stuck in what we have known and fear what is yet to come. Jeff gave the example of the impulse he felt to buy his childhood home when it went on the market a few years ago. Tell us about a time in your life that was so special, you might be tempted to want to go back to it.
- b. In Mark 16:7, the angels say to the women, “Go, tell his disciples . . . that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.” What is the significance of those words applied to us?
- c. In Revelation 21:5, God says, “Behold, I make all things new.” What is the significance of those words applied to our lives?
- d. Before Columbus discovered the New World, the motto on the Spanish coat of arms was *Ne Plus Ultra*, meaning “There is nothing beyond.” After Columbus’ great discovery, the coat of arms was changed to *Plus Ultra*, meaning “There is more beyond.” When in your life have you been tempted to say, “There is nothing beyond”? Was there?
- e. Where in your life right now do you sense Jesus saying, “Stop looking back and start move forward. Take a leap of faith. Together we’ll make all things new.”

Dare to apply the message of the resurrection angels to your life!