

AN EARTHSHAKING EVENT
RESURRECTION / EASTER SUNDAY

MATT 28:1-10
APR 15, 2017

¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me

Jesus' Resurrection is earthshaking good news.

No wonder it is accompanied by an earthquake.

I have been through a couple of earthquakes.

One woke me up and the other I slept through.

When I was a student at the seminary,

I went to the campus laundry room one evening

and took along some studies to do while I waited.

As often happened when I studied, I got tired

and decided to take a short nap.

So I sat leaning against the drier where my clothes were

figuring that when it stopped it would startle me awake.

The next morning, everyone was talking about

the earthquake the night before.

I realized that because of the vibration of the drier

I failed to notice the more major shaking.

Earthquakes may not be common around here

but there is plenty of shaking going on in our lives.

There are wars and political tremors all over the world.

Economic and financial turmoil rattles us.

Sickness and family troubles shake us up.

These things may actually keep us from sleeping

but the continual commotion can distract us

so that we fail to notice the seismic shift that has happened

because of what God has done through Jesus.

GOD BREAKS THE TENSION BETWEEN US AND HIM
GOD CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO WHAT JESUS SAYS
THE EFFECTS EXTEND THROUGH OUR WORLD

GOD BREAKS THE TENSION BETWEEN US AND HIM

² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

Earthquakes result from release of tension

between tectonic plates, massive layers deep in the earth,
one pushing one way and the other pushing against it
with terrific pressure. Something has to give!

When it does, the result is an earthquake.

In our world there are not only massive physical forces
but also spiritual forces in tension.

because the nature of all humanity is broken and twisted,
we push in same direction as the Devil & all his powers
against God's unchangeable perfect will.

There is tension between what God says & what we want
Something has to give.

The Bible says on the last day God will shake

all things so that there is not one stone left on another.

Damage by earthquakes tends to depend on how people build

When buildings are just stacked stones or bricks,
inertia makes them try to stay in the same place even as
what they are rest on moves, so buildings collapse.

More earthquake proof buildings are built with connections
that allow them to move while holding together.

The damage that happens in our lives is from inertia,
when we try to stay the same when God is trying to move us.

This happened to the guards at the tomb.

Why were they there? They were trying to stop
what Jesus he said he was going to do.

But they fell down - like dead men from terrible fear.

We will all fall as dead men unless we have connections
to God in a way that we are moved by him as he moves.

Fortunately, God's movement is for us, not against us.

Despite the brokenness of the whole world caused by sin,
God's holiness and justice which must punish all wrong
is in tension with his total love for all people.

This tension between God's justice and his mercy
is released when Jesus himself fulfills God's justice
by being a human who perfectly does all we must do
and yet, as a mortal, taking the punishment of all
by his death on the cross.

When that happened: earthquake.

And when he rises again, having overcome death & the devil
releasing all of us from their power: another earthquake.

By this earthquake,

GOD CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO WHAT JESUS SAYS

⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that
you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as
he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

In the Bible, earthquakes are associated with God speaking.
like at Mt. Sinai. Earthquakes are wake up calls.

Along with it God sends a messenger at crack of dawn
to open our eyes to what God is doing.

This blazing messenger does not stand with a sword
like the angel guarding the way back to paradise
But this angel sits down because the fight is over.

Jesus has already overcome sin and guilt
and so reopened the way to the tree of life.

And the proof of this is the open and empty grave.

The stone was not removed to let Jesus out
but to let people in to see that he was already alive.
which proves that everything he said is true.

He said he was God himself, the giver of life.

He said he would die and rise again in three days.

He also said that because of this we are fully forgiven
for all of our faults & failures and are loved by God.

He said that those who believe & trust in him
will also live again even though we die
in a heavenly home with unshakable foundations.

He said he will be with us always here
to love and care for us no matter what happens.

So the angel points the women to what he said.

Don't be afraid. Don't go by what you feel even if it feels like
the whole world is falling to pieces around you.

Don't even go by what you see.
because all you can see is that he is gone.

Why didn't Jesus just appear to everyone at once,
why all this sneaking around?
It is because, as he later told Thomas,
he doesn't want us to rely on any appearances
but to rely on what he says in his word.
It often looks like Jesus is gone today
because God works in hidden ways
He is unseen in the water of Baptism.
He is unseen in Holy Communion.
But he is there because he gives us his word.
He is unseen as we go through our day
But he is there because he gives us his word.

And so...

THE EFFECTS EXTEND THROUGH OUR WORLD

⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me

Earthquakes change things, they can change course of rivers.
The resurrection of Jesus is earthshaking.
It shakes things up, changes course of world.
It changes the course of our lives, but how will we see this?
Angel does not tell women to stay there until they see Jesus.
He says, go quickly and do what he tells you to do.
His instructions for the Disciples is not to wait where they are
until they see Jesus.
They are to go back home to Galilee, back to work.
As the women go, then they see Jesus.
When they go to Galilee, there they see Jesus.
Don't just wait until you see what Jesus does for you.
Go do what he tells you to do,
& as you do, then you will see what he does in your life.
What happens when they do see Jesus? The worship him.
That is what happens when we really see and get it,
when God's earthshaking event happens in our lives,
we worship him.

The shocks from earthquakes spread and are felt widely.
The shock waves from Jesus resurrection spread.
What was it the women & disciples were to do? Tell others.
That is how the quake spreads from the women
to the disciples to the ends of the earth, including us.
Now it is our turn, having been moved by God,
to keep on letting it spread through us.
We are to go back to our places, people we know
with this earthshaking news.
Glance around you at the people here this morning.
Are these people going to change the world?
Not any more than those timid women – and they did.
But it is not us who causes the changing.
It is God and his message as that message changes us.
Jesus' resurrection is an earthshaking event
that either we will sleep through because all the other things
jarring our lives will keep us from noticing it,
or it will wake us up when

GOD BREAKS THE TENSION BETWEEN US AND HIM,
the tension between God's justice against our rebellion
and God's mercy toward his creation.

This tension is broken by Jesus death in our place
and his resurrection to give us new life.

GOD CALLS OUR ATTENTION TO WHAT JESUS SAYS

We are not to go by what we feel or fear
or even by what our eyes can see
but by his word which has been proven true.

THE EFFECTS EXTEND THROUGH OUR WORLD

The extend to others as we go and tell them
what he has said and done.

They extend through our whole lives as we go
and Jesus meets us along the way.

They extend all the way through death to our resurrection.