

**MARCH 31, 2024 PASTOR ROXIE DAVIS, FPCPORT HURON,
SERMON: "Go, Share the Good News" SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28**

INTRODUCTION The Sermon Title for today is: "Go Share the Good News." An affirmation of the Great Commission, which we heard in Scripture today. Jesus says to His disciples and to all of us, so many years later: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And lo, (I will never leave) I am with you always, even to the close of the age."

In essence, Jesus says, even today: "I'll never leave. So don't be afraid. I am with you—right beside you—every step of the way." He is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Present with us—Lord and Savior in our lives. Giving Purpose to our lives. Jesus says: "Go Share the Good News" of who I am—Crucified—Resurrected—Risen from the Dead—Go Share the very essence of my Love and My Forgiveness—for all people—No matter who you are—Whatever your lifestyle. It is Jesus' Love and Forgiveness, that will free us and make us whole. That is what Crucifixion and Resurrection are all about—You can't have one without the other.

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?

The Great Commission: Go Share the Good News—about Jesus! But we need to unpack **the Question: What IS the Good News?**

QUOTES FROM OUR HYMNS AND SONGS : Hear the words from the songs and hymns that have been and will be sung today. They tell of the "Good News" of Jesus Christ, Note there is this emphasis on triumph and victory over death and the ugly side of life—Over fear and trembling--not only in our lives--personal but community, nationwide, and worldly.

The Good News—what we hear in these songs is victory and triumphant over hatred, violence and abuse—Jesus' love and His forgiveness **for all people IS the Way, the Truth and the Life. That is Good News! Jesus commissions US to share it. The Hymn: "Jesus Christ is Risen Today"** We sang: Hymns of praise then let us sing, Unto Christ, our heavenly king. Who endured the cross and grave, Sinners to redeem and save! Alleluia!

The Hymn: "Because He Lives" God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus (which means "He Saves.") He came to love, heal and forgive. He bled and died to buy my pardon, An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. Because He lives I (and you) can face tomorrow. Because He lives. all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future And life is worth the living, Just because He lives."

What is good news? Good News gives us hope, for the future. Good News is almost always about Victory—Triumph--overcoming some enormous hurdle—some barricade that keeps fear

alive —or blocks our HOPE for a better future. And when that victory—Triumph comes to us, We rejoice—we jump for joy—We share our excitement—We shout—“yes.”

DOWN TO EARTH EXAMPLES

Let me give some down-to-earth examples. There are many of us who watch during the Month of March—**March Madness—the college basketball tournament. Both men and women.** There is plenty of victory and triumphant over the odds—The Men’s North Carolina State Team (11th seed) defeats Marquette (Minneapolis) (No. 2 seed). There is triumph and the yelling of the victory chant. People are ecstatic! Then there is the Women’ basketball March Madness—Iowa (we used to live in Iowa)—Caitlin Clark—breaking all the college records, both male and female, of college basketball scoring. Everyone cheers for her. “You go, girl.” The hype is amazing!!

Then you have those victories that are not so public. Here in this very sanctuary— A young man who has recently been coming with his family, shares during our Joys and Concerns Prayer Time that he is being accepted into a trade school, the paper work just has to be finished. A great triumph and we all clap for his victory.

And a woman writes me a note this past week and says, “I want to renew my church membership. She has experienced some amazing miracles in her life, at the hand of God. I call her and tell her “how excited I am (my way of cheering)” and she says to me, “My excitement is far more greater than yours.” I think the healing miracles in the life of her family were unexpected—shocking and a huge surprise! How is this all possible? Only by the hand of God.

Perhaps that is the way **the women felt** on that first Easter morning—Shock—Impossible! Jesus died on the cross. We saw it. But then the tomb is empty!

“He is risen,” spoken by the angels. “Go and tell the disciples. He will meet them in Galilee. **”The women go and “share the good news.”** As the days go on, Jesus appears to many. the triumph and victory over death becomes real. **“Nothing is impossible for God.”** You see, the Crucifixion and Resurrection is not just a story that we recognize and honor this Easter Sunday. It is not just a story. It is real. You know why? Because Jesus is not done with us—because Jesus was not done with those disciples—whom we join today. He says to them: “Go—Make disciples, Baptize, and Teach them to obey all my commandments.” Go Share the Good News that I am here, right beside you—Alive and Real. Tell others: “I am with you always.”

TECHNIQUES

We know our ultimate purpose for life—Is to please God—the One who gave us life. Our ultimate purpose in life: Is to Share about Jesus, no matter where we are and with whom we keep company. But how do we share the Good News?

Some Techniques:

The two techniques that have worked for me, I share with you. **First**, form a trusting relationship with people around you; listen well to their life stories, to their troubles, to their joys. Your caring—your love will open doors. All sorts of doors to conversation on a number of topics including faith. And **secondly**, know how you came to faith in Jesus Christ. Know your own experience—Review in your mind and put into words or actions, what Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection has meant in your life--when God has been real for you; and Jesus has stuck close to you? Know your own story and share it, when appropriate and timely. God will do the rest. It says in I Peter 3: 15 “Honor Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. Do this with gentleness and respect.”

REACTIONS OF THOSE AROUND US

Now I will warn you. There will be mixed reactions to your sharing about your faith in Jesus Christ, the Crucified and Risen Lord. We take our cues from the reactions in Scripture. The Risen Lord and His Disciples, encounter different reactions to the Good News of his crucifixion and resurrection—Revealing Signs of God’s Mercy and Love. (I advise you to “Go home and read the Resurrection stories in all four gospels”. You will see what I mean.)

The Men on the Road to Emmaus.

The Risen Lord, Jesus joins them on the road. They don’t recognize him, even though His words light a fire within them. It is not until he breaks bread that they recognize Him. That is going to happen to you. People may hear your story—your words about your faith. And don’t do anything until “life happens” and they recognize that Jesus is the only One who can pull them out of their circumstances.

The Guards at the Tomb—

They see the empty tomb and know that something has happened. They go to the chief priests—They are tempted by big bucks offered to them to keep quiet, and to tell everyone a pack of lies. The Greatest conspiracy theory in all of history: “The disciples stole the body. That’s why the tomb is empty.” **You are going to meet people** like that. “None of this “Jesus” stuff you are spouting is real. You are delusional.” As my good friend Tami says to me all the time: “I only try to be the faithful messenger. My only job is to plant the seeds. The rest is up to God.”

Doubting Thomas and Others

You are going to share the Good News of Jesus and there will be people who will doubt your message. **They need proof**, like Thomas—“until I put my fingers in his hands and in his side, I will not believe.” And there were others who doubted, even when Jesus ascended into heaven. **Yes, you will encounter the doubters. There may be some of you here today.** Give

them time. Give them grace and mercy. That is God's attitude towards all of us. Just be patient and faithful.

The Women at the Tomb –

They see the empty tomb. Yes, they are afraid. But they take seriously the instructions of the angel. They go and share. And Disciples Peter and John are the first to believe in the resurrection—once they run to the tomb. **That will happen to you.** You will share and all of heaven rejoices because someone gets it. They believe because of you, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

That happened to me on Maundy Holy Thursday. We shared communion. We portrayed the Crucifixion in the drama, "Were You There." Then a woman, along with two of her friends, has a conversation with me and shares her wonder and amazement about eternal life, which I spoke about in my Reflections that night.

She is convinced that eternal life is real—Beginning now and stretching into the hereafter. She knows, perhaps for the first time, that Jesus promises to her and to all of us, life with God (that's what eternal life means)—All because of Jesus' victory over sin on that cross and triumph over death in the resurrection. Let me tell you, when you share your faith, things will happen; believe me, others will come to faith and believe in Jesus. It's all in God's plan.

THE ADULT CHOIR

The Adult Choir sang today —Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks! The second verse is this: "Spread the good news over all the earth; Jesus has died and has risen. Alleluia! Alleluia! Give thanks to the living Lord. Alleluia! Alleluia! Give Praise to His Name.

THE VANDAWA(L)KER GIRLS

The Vandawa(l)ker Girls sang a song called "Everybody Has a Little Light to Shine." And I would contend that light is from God—It shines in the Good News!!—only because, as Barry Meier sang, "The Old Rugged Cross made the difference!"

IF YOU DO NOTHING ELSE

If you do nothing else with your life, do this—Share the Good News of Jesus— Share your faith with others, in word and deed. Tell and Show others His love and His forgiveness, brilliantly seen in the Cross and the Resurrection. It will be your happy dance—It will be your victory lap—It will be that triumph chorus that God will sing: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Go. Share the Good News of Jesus Christ—Our Crucified Savior and our Resurrected Lord. Thanks be to God! In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.