

**Sermon Notes**  
**NEW DAY DAWNING**

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EASTER Sunday, April 12, 2020  
Luke 24:13-25

**The positive P's include**

Playful, Peaceful, & Paradise; Patience, Promise, & Praise; Priceless,  
Prayers & Partners; Precious, Pizza & Pizazz . . .

**The dismal D's include**

Delay, Decline, Despair, Difficulty, Disability, Disease, Discontentment,  
Disappointment, Disillusionment, Domination, Doubt, Danger,  
Darkness, & Death . . .

**I. AFTER GOOD FRIDAY**

- JESUS' FRIENDS WERE STUCK IN THE *DISMAL D'S*

**A. Feeling:**

The power and unfairness of **forces beyond their control**

= The Political forces – Romans + religious Leaders

The power and finality of **death** itself

= Like many today, feeling robbed, stolen, cut short

Poem by an unknown English soldier who died in a POW camp in Singapore in 1942 (Found by the late Princeton Univ. chaplain, Ernest Gordon)

*What shall I think when I am called to die?  
Shall I find too soon that life has ended?  
The years too quickly have hastened by  
With so little done of all that I'd intended.*

*There were so many things I'd meant to try,  
-- So many contests I had hoped to win;  
And, lo, the end approaches just as I  
was thinking-- of preparing -- to begin.*

**B. Fact:**

with Jesus death they lost

- Their **purpose and meaning that came from his calling**
- Their **relationship** with him (a deep friendship)

**i. The Importance of Relationships**

- During the pandemic, are we now more aware of this than ever?
- Some relationships are not just “peripheral,” but “part of us”: more like a limb than a piece of clothing we can change easily.  
-- (In A Grief Observed, C.S. Lewis said that the loss of some loved ones or friends is so deep that it is like *an amputation*).

**ii. The Importance of a Purpose that comes from A Calling**

- **More than 10 million people** losing jobs or furloughed -- asking:
  - Not only, “*How will we make ends meet?*” and “*What do we do next?*”
  - But also, “*Who am I when I cannot do what I do?*” and “*What's my purpose or my calling now?*”
- Jesus gave his followers a place on his team that included both “friendship/relationship” and “calling/purpose.”
  - When feeding over 5000 people (Mark 6:37; John 6:1-9) Jesus effectively said to his friends: “You do what you can – and I'll do my part!”
  - He calls us too into his service to feed the hungry (both body and soul).

**II. AFTER EASTER**

- **SEEING JESUS ALIVE, MOVED JESUS' FRIENDS INTO THE POSITIVE P'S!** With Death Defeated, Relationship and Purpose with Jesus were brought back to Life. A new, never-ending day had dawned.

**Gift 1a: Death Defeated -- Evidence**

- The Emmaus friends did not believe that death had been defeated until they understood the Scriptures, and saw Jesus alive again with their own eyes. As in The Apostles' Creed, they believed in the “resurrection of the body.”
- An empty tomb and rumors of angels was not sufficient to ensure this truth.
- God is interested not just in our “souls” but in all of us, soul AND body.

**Gift 1b: Death Defeated – Life now can make sense as a “Two-Act Play”**

- If Death is not the end, then Powerlessness, Injustice, Loss, Confusion, and more, do not win the day. The Dismal D's do not win the day. There's more to the story . . .
- God works in, and triumphs even now through suffering and even death. Jesus said (John 12:24), “*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.*”

### **Gift 2: Death Defeated -- Relationship Restored: Now and Eternally**

- Jesus is alive to restore the relationship broken by death
- He is a friend who will never fail us or forsake (Hebrews 13:5) the disciples walking to Emmaus back then – or us, today.

### **Gift 3: Death Defeated – Purpose and Calling restored: Now and Eternally**

- Jesus is alive to call us into his service, giving us a purpose to pursue.
- Jesus friends heard his voice again, and knew his mission and purpose for their lives was ongoing . . . as it is with us, now.

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The late **Viktor Frankl**, a psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor, speaks about the importance of purpose/calling and significant relationships like this (Man's Search for Meaning pp. 16-17)

Don't aim at success or happiness --the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so

**1. as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself** (DR: Jesus' PURPOSE for us?)

**2. or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself** (DR: our RELATIONSHIP with Jesus?)

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### **Recommendations:**

- The best book available on “the resurrection of the body” is Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church by N.T. Wright.
- The best poetic summary is by John Updike's “Seven Stanzas At Easter” (in Telephone Poles and Other Poems. London: Andre Deutsch, 1964). Here are four of the seven:

Let us not mock God with metaphor,  
analogy, sidestepping transcendence;  
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the  
faded credulity of earlier ages:  
let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not paper-maché,  
not a stone in a story,  
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow  
grinding of time will eclipse for each of us  
the wide light of day.

Make no mistake: if He rose at all  
it was as His body;  
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the  
molecules  
reknit, the amino acids rekindle,  
the Church will fall.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,  
for our own convenience, our own sense of  
beauty,  
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are  
embarrassed by the miracle,  
and crushed by remonstrance