

## “A Resurrection of the Heart”

Rev. Dr. Ian Mevorach

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When a person dies, one way we measure the impact of that person’s life is in terms of how their presence, words and deeds made us feel. After Jesus’ death, his students and friends were devastated to be without his love, without a person who inspired them and empowered them to believe that God was with them and that all things are possible, that a new world is possible.

Today we celebrate the fact that the love and vision of Jesus did not die when he was crucified and buried, but when he came alive to his disciples that same revolutionary love rose up in them in a surprising and powerful way.

I say that Jesus came alive to his disciples—he did not appear to anyone else. There are stories of Jesus proving that he was really there—allowing his disciples to touch his scars, breaking bread with them, eating—but then he disappears, walks through walls, and after a short time ascends into heaven. The point is that the resurrection of Jesus is not a historical fact but a spiritual reality. Jesus was publicly crucified, that is a fact, but he rose in the hearts of those who loved him.

Before Mary sees Jesus we hear that she was weeping; this is important because it tells us that her heart was broken, it indicates how deep her loss was. When Mary first sees the empty tomb she runs to get Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved, and they run to the tomb, they’re moving quickly, not really feeling the pain of their loss. Maybe their hearts are numb. They don’t see Jesus. Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved love go home but Mary stays to look for Jesus and in this process she opens up to the full pain of what she has lost. She weeps before she looks in the tomb, she weeps as she talks with the angels, and she weeps as she turns and sees Jesus and comes to recognize her beloved teacher.

In this passage it is like a control experiment. Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved look in the tomb first and find nothing...they are in the tombsite, they see the garments lying there. Mary Magdalene looks into the tomb, weeping, and sees angels. Her tears are revelatory. Her broken heart is revelatory.

If we weep with Mary, we will experience the resurrection of the heart, as she did. We will see Jesus as she did; which means we will know the truth. We will come alive with the power of love, which is the creative power of the universe.

When Mary first arrives at the tomb she finds it empty, and runs to tell Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved; they run to the tomb and also find it empty. They are looking for Jesus' body but cannot find it. As Mary continues to search, she is overcome by grief and begins to cry. After she starts crying, there is a breakthrough. Her tears are very significant, and can remind us of the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead (which we heard a couple of weeks ago). Mary weeps and Jesus weeps with her right before he raises Lazarus from the dead. Jesus tells Mary not to hold onto him...she has not really found his body but she has experienced the power of the resurrection, a matter of the heart.

Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the disciple whom Jesus loved (who is also the author of the passage), were Jesus' closest followers. They loved him greatly.

Her tears are a sign of an intensity and depth of feeling, of a heart broken open to the pain of Jesus' death...it is this great love that allows Mary to see Jesus. They say that love makes us blind but maybe it helps us to see more clearly.

The resurrection is not an objective fact but a matter of the heart.

Love is what allowed Mary to see the risen Jesus.

Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved

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From the beginning of time the whole creation has been an outpouring of God's love...and God is continually recreating this world. Humanity is not moving forward by our own ingenuity, not by our technological prowess or economic growth, we are moving forward insofar as we grow in love and compassion. If we do not allow the love of God to enter our hearts we do not progress but we degrade ourselves and the entire planet, we become destruction. Our so-called

scientific progress coupled with hate has produced nuclear weapons, it has produced climate change; we will not progress unless our hearts are alive.

Our world is in a depressing way because humans are treating it without love, we are treating ourselves and one another without love; our actions are heartless.

War is violent hatred...what has happened to our hearts, how greatly have they been distorted, that so many people are attracted to the idea of war?

In these times it does not take much to tap into the pain of the world that we all feel...the images and videos are all around us. Many of us are more awake to this pain than ever before and are asking the question, What do I do with this? How do I live? The Gospel message is that we will see more clearly with tears in our eyes and that when our heart is truly broken up with pain, then it will be filled with God's love and we will experience the resurrection. The resurrection is God's love poured into our hearts, renewing us, recreating us, waking us up.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:7)

Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

The resurrection is a heart full of love, awakened to the cosmic force of love that would flow through us.

In our community at Common Street we aspire to cultivate this kind of love. The resurrection of the heart is where the vision of the new world grows from, it is also the substance of the vision, which is a world where hearts are full of love; in the theology of the Gospel of John this means that we are full of God; when that love enters our hearts we are children of God. We feel divine and we know that the work we do in the world is not our own but is the will of the spirit of all life, the creator. Then we become co-creators with God.