

April 1, 2018  
John 20:1-18

St. Paul UMC, Omaha

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"The C, C, C! Easter Message"

Life can be confusing at times. Oftentimes those of us who are older are confused by this, that and the other on our smart phones or computers. We need a grade school child to help us out. On the other hand, sometimes old "technology" can confuse those who are younger.

The boys had been up in the attic together helping their mother with some cleaning. The kids uncovered an old manual typewriter and asked her, "Hey Mom, what's this?"

"Oh, that's an old typewriter," she answered, thinking that would satisfy their curiosity.

"Well, what does it do?" they queried.

"I'll show you," she said and returned with a blank piece of paper. She rolled the paper into the typewriter and began striking the keys, leaving black letters of print on the page.

"WOW!" they exclaimed, "That's really cool. But how does it work like that? Where do you plug it in?"

"There is no plug," she answered. "It doesn't need a plug."

"Then where do you put the batteries?" they persisted.

"It doesn't need batteries either," she continued.

"Wow! This is so cool!" they exclaimed. "Someone should have invented this a long time ago!"

Confusion is part of the human experience in different ways for each and every one of us. It was certainly part of the original Easter morning experience.

Sunday morning, that first Easter morning, Mary goes to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus or maybe just cry. The tomb is open and the body is gone. She makes a mad dash back to the disciples and tells them the tomb is open, the body is gone and she has no idea where it might be.

Confusion, that is the first C in the C, C, C! Easter message from our gospel lesson.

"Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes."

As they return to the Upper Room where all the disciples are huddled together they seem to be as confused as Mary. The body of Jesus is no longer in the tomb but where could it be.

Mary returns to the tomb and the confusion continues even when Mary is addressed by two angels. "But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

The confusion even continues when Mary is addressed by Jesus, himself.

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher).

Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Boom, it not a gardener but it is Jesus! Crystal clear clarity! It is Jesus. The one she saw crucified as she wept at the foot of the cross is standing before her. It is Jesus. He is not bound to the tomb. He is not dead. He is alive!

Clarity, that is the second C in the C, C, C! Easter message from our gospel lesson.

Crystal clear clarity has dawned upon Mary this first Easter morning and she is excited to share it. Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she shared the Good News, Jesus, the crucified one is now Jesus the resurrected one!

Confusing moments, we all have them.

When we have confusing moments we are in good company. Mary, Peter, and the other disciple who followed Jesus for three years experienced confusing moments on the morning of the resurrection. Confusing moments are part and parcel of the human experience.

When you or I are confused it is helpful to turn to God for clarity. When you or I are confused let us have faith that clarity will come to pass. When clarity does come we will celebrate just like the followers of Jesus did in the Upper Room that first Easter morning.

Celebration, that is the third C in the C, C, C! Easter message from our gospel lesson.

After times of confusion we truly celebrate when clarity comes into focus. It is such a relief and joy.

We gather today to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. We gather today to celebrate our new life in Christ. Amen.