

Luke 24:1-11   Easter   4.20.25   Bill Uetracht

Many years back, Robert Fulghum wrote a best-selling book titled **All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten**. In this work, he says that in kindergarten this is what he learned:

Share everything, Play fair. Don't hit people.  
Put things back where you found them.  
Clean up your own mess.  
Don't take things that aren't yours.  
Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.  
Wash your hands before you eat. Flush.  
Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.  
Live a balanced life – learn some and think some  
and draw and paint and sing and dance and play  
and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon.  
When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic,  
hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder.

Fulghum's primary point is that we learn what is most important for life by the time we are finished with kindergarten. From then on, life and education are just a matter of remembering.

Now, while Fulghum's thoughts may be a bit simplistic and even moralistic to me, I appreciate his insight and think the writer of the Gospel of Luke would as well.

In today's gospel reading from Luke, we get to experience some of Luke's big emphases. And one of those emphases has to do with the word "remember." Other gospels don't use this word. But in Luke we hear, "*Remember* how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." And then we also hear,

“Then the women *remembered* his words, and returning from the tomb, they told this to the eleven and to all the rest.”

Remember. They remembered. Let’s be honest. We forget very easily. The older I get the more I forget. It drives me crazy. Computers don’t help me, frankly. I start a task, and then I notice a video about a current political reality or a development in the religious world. I pay attention to these and then forget what I was going to do in the first place. My memory is short. Candidly, our collective memory is short. It doesn’t take long for us to forget what happened and how what happened shaped and affected us.

The women had forgotten what Jesus said to them in Galilee, that he would be handed over to *sinners*. You see, crucifixion is a sin, perhaps the worst possible sin, a matter of turning our backs on love. Jesus would be handed over to those who live contrary to the ways of God and then die on a cross, die the death of a shamed man. And then, he said, he would be raised. They had forgotten all of that.

Who could blame them? When you are in the midst of trauma, you don’t remember well. Trauma often stunts your memory. You are so overtaken by the moment that you don’t remember much at all. I have been with loads of people who are in crisis or trauma. They forget the basics often. People who work with trauma victims need to be patient with them and their memory loss.

The women who have come to the tomb on Sunday, not on Saturday because that was the Sabbath, and pious Jews don’t do work on the Sabbath—these women came just to take care of the body, just to do what is right and good. They are moving forward; they aren’t remembering. But when the two men, figures we can

assume are angels, invite them into remembrance, they do remember. And it is a remembering that sends them forward. It is a remembering that, yes, he would be killed, and yes, he would be raised, that gives them a new lease on life. *Remembering*, they then leave the tomb and tell the disciples that Jesus' body isn't in the tomb, that he has been raised. They shouldn't be looking for the living among the dead.

Biblically, remembering is not just giving a nod to a memory from the past. You know, remember when we took this trip, ate this food, saw this person. That kind of memory only requires a brief visit to the past. Biblical remembering is about making what was past present. To remember what Jesus said was for the women to allow his words to become present reality. To remember was to change the present. To remember was to face the pain of crucifixion. It was to tell the truth about death, that even death was a necessary part of the story. But that necessary suffering, as Rohr likes to call it, was not the end. To remember was also to welcome the truth of resurrection. "He is not here, but has risen."

The whole story needs to be remembered. "Were you there?" is not simply the title of a beautiful hymn. It is the appropriate question asked of all of us in relationship to the events that have led Jesus to his Last Supper, his crucifixion, and yes, his resurrection.

A part of what we attempt to do around here is to remember the Holy Week events in a way that enables us to feel that we are *there*. "Were you there?" Yes, we are. We march in with Jesus to Jerusalem. We experience all the horror that happens in Jerusalem. We get our feet washed. We yell out, "Crucify him." And then we cry over our mob mentality, our betrayal and our denial. And then, with

Mary Magdalene we show up on Sunday morning, in the dark, expecting simply to grieve. And the light appears, the flowers burst forth. The beauty returns. And we remember, “As yes, he told us that he would rise again on the third day.”

And guess what? This is the third day. And there are a couple of men (and maybe in our case, a woman and a man) dressed in dazzling white asking us, “Why are we seeking the living among the dead? He is no longer here; he has been raised.”

Remember that! Remember that when the burdens are too big to bear. Remember that when the grief is overwhelming! Remember that when hope seems so far away, when despair seems to be your home! Remember that when your health struggles overwhelm you. Remember that when your nation seems like it is in chaos! Remember that when darkness doesn't seem to want to give way to day! Remember that when you are feeling remarkably alone! Remember that when the funeral dirges seem to be the only music playing in your ear! Remember that when you are getting ready to throw in the towel, when you don't know if you can actually love anymore! Remember that when your and your family's dysfunction seems stronger than ever. Remember that when you wonder if what you have done—your betrayal, your stupid choices, your denial—or what has been done to you, are the only things you can remember about yourself! Remember that when you start to believe that what is will always be! Remember that when you start to doubt that there will ever be justice in the world, that what you do in the world doesn't matter! Remember, “Just as he said, he is not here. He has been raised.”

I don't think it is coincidental that Easter was originally a pagan festival celebrating spring and light. Spring, even if it is slow in coming in Michigan, is nature's way of remembering, "He is not here; he is risen."

Brett Hesla, a contemporary song writer, in one of his best songs has written: "With a song of joy, the buds shall break; with a song of joy, the seeds shall wake. With a song of hope the sun will burn; with a song of hope, the geese return." Nature itself remembers. The daffodils remember. The crocuses remember. The birds remember. The temperatures remember. Nature remembers that just as he said, he is not here; he is risen.

So, too, are we to remember. It's not an idle tale. We probably learned about it in kindergarten. But it is the heart and soul of our faith. He is not among the dead. He has been raised. Now that is something worth remembering, something worth building our lives on.