

Lk 24:1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

24:2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

24:3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

24:4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

24:5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

24:6 "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,

24:7 "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "

24:8 And they remembered His words.

24:9 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

24:11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

24:12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

From today's sermon.

How God must be so frustrated when He sees that we are uncertain, forgetful, pessimistic, and timid.

God is always filling us with good things and powerfully escorting us to not be afraid, but we are at a loss, saying we are afraid, afraid, unable to look up, standing still, distracted by things we don't need to see, noticing things we should notice, thinking only the worst about things, We are weak and powerless, we are self-reliant, we exclude God, we forget God's encouragement, we go on our own, but without strength and with bad results. How frustrated God must be with us!

Why doesn't He trust us? Why won't you trust and rely on me? Why can't you just see things in a bad light? Why can't you trust me to love you and be happy? I love you so much and think for you." This is not a conversation between people, but a message from God to us.

What do we think God is like? Do we think that we can believe in God if we want to, or do we think that God is just a comforting presence? No, we want to believe that relying on God is a tremendous power.

Happy Easter, everyone!

It has been a cold, cold March, but finally the cold has melted away and the cherry blossoms are in bloom.

Because of His overflowing love for us, Jesus voluntarily went to the cross to redeem us. The disciples could not stay awake and pray with the Lord, and when He was arrested, they scattered and fled. Even Peter, the first disciple, denied the Lord again and again, three times until morning came. He was disqualified as a disciple. We are disqualified as believers. The Lord did not give us salvation because we were qualified; He loved us unconditionally and saved us even though we were disqualified and not qualified to be saved.

And even though we are surrounded by His beautiful, unconditional love and are being helped and protected, we are still in such a helpless state, and even though we have such a perfect Savior, we still feel happy and sad, at a loss and disappointed. How weak, feeble, angry, and distraught we are! Why can't we trust in the Lord's steadfast protection and victory?

24:1 On the first day of the week, before dawn, the women went to the tomb with the perfume they had prepared.

2 But a stone was rolled away from the tomb,

3 And when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And when they were at a loss, behold, two men appeared to them, clothed in shining garments.

The women, having completed their preparations before the Sabbath, eagerly awaited the dawn, and went out to the tomb of the Lord, carrying costly perfumed oil, to offer Him, at least as much sincerity as they could, that they might at least remove the stench of death from His body and preserve His nobility. What sincerity, what warmth of gratitude.

However, life is full of "by the way" incidents.

The stone of the grave had been rolled away. This was an unexpected event that should never have happened. How could this happen when there were guards on duty? He had attracted so much public attention, so there were people who had all kinds of ideas about him, who wanted to sabotage him, steal from him, or whatever, something bad happened to him.

2 But a stone was rolled away from the tomb,

3 And when he went in, he could not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And when they were at a loss, behold, two men appeared to them, clothed in shining garments.

4 And when they were at a loss, behold, two men in shining garments appeared to them, and said, "How can this be? The stone should not have been rolled away, and it is unwillingness to find the stone rolled away like this, and the body of the Lord is what should be found here, and yet it is not found. Why does the world find trivial things that it should not find, and not find what it should find here? Why is it that the things we wish for and the things we don't wish for are so intermingled? Why is it that life is so disturbed, so disordered, so full of worries? Why is it that life is not as we wish it to be, why is it that nothing happens without incident, without obstacle, without smoothness? I am at a loss, I am at a loss, I am at a loss, I am at a loss, I am at a loss. I am at a loss, I am at a loss, I am at a loss, I am at a loss, I am at a loss.

I believe that in our lives, too, we are often struck by realities that are hard to accept at times. Why is it this way, why is it not this way? Why can't it be this way when it should be this way? The gap between the ideal and the reality can be overwhelming.

Why are the stones of the tomb being rolled away? It is inexcusable. The stone of the tomb should be firmly closed there to protect our beloved Lord. Where are the watchmen, you worthless bastards? Where is the body of the Lord? Who stole it? Who has done such a terrible thing? We have come all the way here with fragrance. I wanted to repay the noble Lord with something so wonderful, with a fragrant scent, with no trace of emaciation, with grace. How could this happen? How could this happen?

We are blocked by the thick walls of reality, tossed about, unable to do what we want, unable to do what we wish, and at a loss. When we go outside, we trip and twist our feet or lose things, and when we stay at home, we get burned by knocking over hot water or spill food on our clothes and make a mess.

The other day I visited New Zealand with my wife and daughter to visit my son who is studying abroad.

My son was staying in a dormitory in a small town and we wanted to stay in the town where he lives, but he said he had had enough of this town and wanted me to take him to a bigger town, so we flew from Auckland airport to the town where the dormitory is located, visited the dormitory once, and flew back 3-4 hours later to the bigger town of Auckland. We decided to fly back and stay in the big town of Auckland. I planned to maximize the time for the

connection from Auckland to my son's town to make up for the time spent in the dormitory, but as I did more research, I realized that the connection would take a long time and I might not make it in time for the connection I had planned, which made me pale. If I missed the flight, I would not be able to see the dormitories even though I had traveled so far. I wouldn't even get to say hello to the teachers. My son could come to Oakland by himself afterwards and I could see him, but it would ruin my plans. I blamed myself, wondering why I had not been able to get this information earlier.

When we arrived at the Auckland airport, I took all of my wife and daughter's luggage and we all drove through the airport at 5:00 a.m. Japan time (9:00 a.m. local time) and passed through the immigration and quarantine gates. It was unexpectedly empty and rattled. Relieved, we boarded a domestic flight and arrived at the dorm where my son was waiting, where we were able to greet the teachers and see the inside of his dorm room. I was just about to leave the room when my wife asked my son if he had his passport with him. My wife asked my son if he had his passport with him, and he started opening his wallet, drawer, and bag. What, it's time to go to the airport and board the plane now, and he doesn't have his passport now? Once we board the plane, we have to check in at the hotel. I don't even know where I'll be asked for my passport, and now I don't have one? You want to go to a big city and stay there, but without your passport, you can't live with them, and you have to say goodbye. Why didn't he prepare a passport in advance for this moment when he came all the way from far away to see you? Why can't you understand that? I was already exhausted and angry.

My wife said, "Let's pray for them to find them," and we prayed with our son and daughter, but I was so angry that I couldn't even think about it. I am so sorry for being such a pastor. I am so sorry.

I can't find him, I can't find him, and the time just goes on and on. The time for the flight was getting closer. At that time, my wife casually peeked into a small, seemingly empty paper bag that was there. My son's passport was indeed there. My son said, "I don't remember putting it in there," but we found it anyway, so we hurriedly called a cab and left the dormitory.

It really is something of a tightrope trip. After that, we finished our three nights in Auckland happily without any happenings, and each of us left for our own direction. However, on the return flight, another incident occurred.

As soon as we boarded the plane, my daughter dozed off with her cell phone in her hand, and when she woke up, she could not find her cell phone anywhere. I tried hard to find it between the blankets, on the seat, in the seat pocket, etc., but I couldn't find it. Trouble again. I became angry again and wondered why my family was bothering me so much and not letting me, the caretaker of the trip, relax and unwind. It fell out of my hand while I was sleeping and slid somewhere under my seat along the floor of the plane where there would be hundreds of

people, and if someone picked it up on this plane with who knows how many people in the world on board, they might pretend not to know and take it away. No more. Why do I have to go through this ordeal again, why do I keep getting into trouble, why does my family always bother me? Why do my family members always bother me? I felt sorry for myself, looked down on my family, and was angry and distressed.

I got up from my seat and asked a flight attendant for advice. She fumbled with her feet for a moment, then smiled and showed me my daughter's cell phone and said, "Is this it? I thanked her again and again, saying, "Oh, that's it, that's it, thank you very much.

We always and always easily lose our composure, are disappointed, and despair.

The stone should not have been rolled away! Your body is not supposed to be gone! Why, why is this happening? We are easily at our wits' end and stand still on the path of life.

But this was salvation for us.

24:5 And the women were astonished and afraid, and fell on their faces to the ground, and these two said, "Why do you ask the Living One among the dead?

24:6 He is not here. He is risen. Remember what He told you while He was still in Galilee.

24:7 He said that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and rise again the third day.

Why do you ask the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen.

Our God is not dead. He is alive even now.

(quoted from "The Reformation and 'Luther's Wife'" by ☆Pastor's Wife☆[Kokoro no Blog])

The Reformation was not just about Luther sticking his writings into churches, but also about the danger to his life if he did so.

Sure enough, Luther was warned that he would be excommunicated, he was exiled to the Reich, and he never knew when or what danger might befall him.

At one point, Luther was so demoralized by the severe condemnation and persecution he was receiving in the Reformation movement that he almost lost hope.

At that time, his wife, Katharina, came into his study wearing black mourning clothes and a black hat.

Luther was startled and asked, "Who has passed away?" His wife Katharina replied, "God has passed away." God has passed away.

What did you say? God? Don't be ridiculous! Luther replied, "If our God is alive, why are you so disappointed? Let us rely on the power of the living God and fight on! Luther was so encouraged that he gained strength again.

(End of quote)

And has not God left us His Word in advance, so that we might be able to foresee what is to come and endure? But we easily forget that Word, the rope of hope, and are at a loss, unable to see anything in the midst of reality and troubles. We are masters of being anxious and distraught. We are masters of being angry and sad and forgetting our hope.

Romans 8:28 We know that God works with those who love Him, those who are called according to His plan, to make all things work together for good.

1 Corinthians 10:13 And there is nothing in the tribulation which ye have met with, which is not of the world. God is true. He will not put you under trials that you cannot endure, but He will also provide a way for you to endure them.

Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat, and hath permitted it.

22:32 But I prayed for you, that your faith might not fail. So when you get back on your feet, give strength to your brothers."

Why do you ask the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen.

Is our God alive? Are we not in mourning before Him?

24:7 Did He not say, "The Son of Man must surely be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and rise again on the third day?

God's story is a wonderful story of hope and victory that protects and nurtures us. God will never abandon us.

1 Peter 2:6 says in the Bible, "Behold, I lay in Zion a precious stone, a corner stone, a chosen stone. He who trusts in it will never be disappointed.

2:7 This stone is precious to you who ask more, but to the unbelievers it is "the stone which the house-builders cast away, which became the cornerstone,

2:8 And "a stone of stumbling and a rock of obstruction. But they stumble because they disobey the Word, and they were actually destined to do so.

2:9 But you are a chosen race, a nation of priests, a holy nation, a people to be attached to God. 2:10 And you are a chosen race, a nation of priests, a holy nation, a people attached to God, so that you may recount the works of Him who has brought you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

2:10 Formerly ye were not God's people, but now ye are God's people; formerly ye were without mercy, but now ye are those who have received mercy.

24:8 Then the women remembered his words,

24:9 And when they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven disciples and to everyone else.

24:10 These women were Mary Magdalene, Johanna, and Mary the mother of Jacob. The other women who were with them also told the apostles about this.

24:11 But it seemed foolishness to them, and they did not believe it.

The disciples were also still stubborn and could only think of themselves.

Matthew 16:22 Then Peter drew Jesus aside and began to chide Him, saying, "Lord, this is absurd. It can't be true.

16:23 And Jesus turned around and said to Peter, "Pull back, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. You think not of God, but of men."

The wonderful story of the Lord's victory and hope is moving forward, but those who are trapped in fear, worry, and disappointment are unable to believe in victory and hear it as foolish talk, empty nonsense.

For us, is Jesus, His birth, His miracles, His redemption by substitutionary death, and His resurrection empty, hollow, silly nonsense? Is Jesus a dead man? Or is He the one who still lives to protect us supremely and to guide us in all things for our good?

Easter. The Lord who rose from the grave, the Lord who can go even now, revives our dead faith as we mourn and grieve.

◇Prayer; Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. We give thanks to God for all the powerful salvation for us that has been manifested through the resurrection of our Lord. Our Lord is always alive to help us. May we trust in Him with all our strength. Please guide all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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