

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I. Upper Room

A. They were all gathered in that upper room ...

1. They had heard the stories ... the impossible news ... the story that Mary and the other women told about an **EMPTY TOMB** ... and Angels, of all things—and the ridiculous notion that **Jesus had been raised** from the dead.

2. Now, these two others, who had gone home to Emmaus, had come bursting in saying, “We have seen the Lord.”

3. It was all too much.

4. “If only **WE** could see the Lord,” they thought—“if we could just see for ourselves, and **KNOW** all this was real ...”

5. And suddenly, **THERE HE WAS**, saying “Peace be with you.”



Be not a - fraid, sing out for joy! Christ is ris - en, al - le -



lu - ia! Be not a - fraid, sing out for joy!



Christ is ris - en, al - le - lu - ia!

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TWICE

B. But still—they couldn't believe their eyes—"It must be a Ghost!"

1. So, Jesus said, "Hey, do you have anything to eat?"

2. So they gave him a piece of BROILED FISH to eat and he did.

3. Do you remember the scene in that wonderful movie *Ghost* how Patrick Swayze couldn't pick up anything solid—and how hard he had to focus all his energy just to be able to move a bottle cap?

4. Well, the same principle applies here—Ghosts can't pick up anything solid—they go right through—and Ghosts certainly don't eat;
- so, by picking up the FISH and eating it—Jesus proved to them he wasn't a GHOST—but was ALIVE – He was RAISED—just like he told them.

5. Through this simple act of fellowship—sharing a meal with his friends—Jesus lets them know that he is truly alive.

6. But Jesus doesn't just leave it at that—he SENDS them out—they are now to tell:

Be not a - fraid, sing out for joy! Christ is ris - en, al - le -
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Repeat

C. As we read in the Gospel, Jesus says: “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled ...

1. “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

- “You are witnesses of these things.”

2. Jesus sends them out and EMPOWERS them to be his Witnesses—to share the Good News of God’s Love—to tell the story.

3. They are to let everyone know that the Messiah is much more than a savior from political oppression and economic exploitation.

- He had to suffer and die so that in his rising from death, *the whole creation could become new.*

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Repeat

II. Sent to tell

A. And what is it they are sent to tell?

What is the key message that is in all those scriptures he unlocked for them?

1. That God is love.

2. That God loves us—and wants what’s best for us—and wants to be in relationship with us.

3. As I said at Easter, God sent Jesus to tell, and ultimately, to show that God's very nature is LOVE—and that God is a God of RELATIONSHIP.

4. God is not some vengeful beast that must be appeased through fear and sacrifice—God is LOVE—and wants to be in **harmony** and **relationship** with all of creation.

B. As the writer of our NT Lesson puts it: “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God: and that is what we are...”

1. We are children of God—each and every one of us is a **Beloved child** of God—everyone.

2. And that is the message that WE are sent to tell.

3. A message for all the ages—but never more true than in these times of pandemic—that we are God's children—and God loves us—just the way we are—and longs to be in a loving relationship with us.

4. Just think of that: each and every one of us is a Beloved Child of God.

C. Think of what a difference it could make in our lives and in our world if we would just realize this and live it out in our lives—that **each of us** is a child of God.

1. What if the police officers in Minneapolis had recognized that **George Floyd** was a fellow child of God—and treated him as such?

- How much pain and sorrow could have been avoided?

2. Or any of the other situations we hear about with police and people of color—or **any relationship** where two people come into contact; what a difference if we would just remember that the other **IS** a Beloved Child of God, and treat them as such.

3. What a difference in **our own lives** if we worked to remember that everyone we come into contact with is a **beloved child of God**;

- and most importantly to remember that we ourselves are a **beloved child of God**

4. That is the message that Jesus gives us to share in our world today—that the God of Love loves us more than we could ever know and wants to be in relationship with us—and that each of us is a Beloved Child of God.

5. And Just as Jesus sent the Apostles out and EMPOWERED them to be his Witnesses—to share the Good News of God’s Love—to tell the story—so, too, he will be with US as we are sent out to share the story—and share God’s love.

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Repeat

C. Jesus **IS CLOSE**—He **IS NEAR**—even though we have not touched his hands and feet, or eaten with him—we know he is present.

1. Every time a sense of calm takes over an intense situation—Jesus is near.

2. Every time we feel the impulse to serve another in love—Jesus is near.

3. Every time we break bread with friends or strangers or encounter kindness in our everyday life—Jesus is near.

4. Look at what happens in most of these post-resurrection stories: Jesus gathers to eat with his friends.

5. And just as Jesus eats with his friends—we gather to eat **his meal** with our friends to receive his love and blessing.

6. As one commentator put it: “Jesus is here, among us still—in our families, our gatherings, in our hopes and realizations as we walk in the joy of the Resurrection.

- “The extraordinary, the Divine, intersects with the ordinary, the earthly, daily tasks we find before us.

- “Worship and witness, prayer and work—all are part of the same fabric for the Christian.

- “The bread of the Risen Christ at the altar leads us to sharing the bread of the earth with the hungry.

- We receive his Body in order to go forth to BE his Body in the world.” (*Synthesis*, p.4)

III. We are witnesses

A. Jesus is SO CLOSE—closer than we can ever know.

1. And as a result of that closeness, WE, TOO, are sent out to be his WITNESSES—to tell his story—just as the first Disciples were;

- WE are WITNESSES of these things.

2. And as WITNESSES, our job is to share—to tell—to make known.

3. WE **HAVE SEEN THE LORD**—we have felt his presence.

4. Even when our inner doors are locked in fear—Jesus enters in and fills them with the joy of his resurrection.

5. For, as Sister Marian Elder writes, “*We know he is risen and lives forever, for WE are where he is risen, WE are where he lives.*

- “*We carry the flames of his life that must not be hidden under a bushel, that cannot be destroyed in a tomb.*”

6. And so WE are sent to GO and TELL.

B. WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD—we have felt his presence.

1. We know his presence in that calming spirit when all else seems lost.

2. We know he is with us as we are guided in helping another with things we had no idea we could do.

3. He is with us every time we receive the **BREAD** at the altar and are guided to give of ourselves, our gifts, our lives, to make Jesus' story a reality for another.

4. And now we need to pause and reflect and ask ourselves, "In what way have we been sent to be **WITNESSES** of Jesus' resurrection?"

5. And with that in mind, "What do we need to ask from Jesus to help share his message of God's love?"

6. How do we live this message in our lives?

- How do we treat one another as Beloved children of God?

6. WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD—Go and tell.

The musical score is written on three staves in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Be not a - fraid, sing out for joy! Christ is ris - en, al - le -". The second staff continues the melody with a long note for "lu - ia!" followed by "Be not a - fraid, sing out for joy!". The third staff concludes the phrase with "Christ is ris - en, al - le - lu - ia!" and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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