

April 19 & 20, 2025

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## In and Out of the Wilderness:

### *Resurrection / Easter*

Luke 24:1-12

Pastor Paul Dean

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*The early witnesses proclaimed that Jesus was alive. The resurrection is not something that happened only in the past. Resurrection is something that happens to us, over and over again. It's a daily dying and rising with Jesus the Christ. Resurrection brings Jesus alive in our world our time. Resurrection makes new life possible for us.*

Have you ever heard the phrase – wow, what happened to you, or – wow you were like a different person out there. It's a phrase that is used especially in athletics when someone who hasn't really shown their potential suddenly has a great game or great performance. We also use phrases like that when we see someone who has lost a tremendous amount of weight – they look like a different person.

I remember this kind of thing happening to my daughter when she was learning to ride a bike. We had been through the many stages of learning how to ride a bike and now it was time to take the training wheels off. You could see in her face - the desire, but also the fear. But one day, she finally decided that day was the day, and she took off. And as she rode with more and more confidence she looked like a different kid.

On this Easter Sunday we recognize that this is what Resurrection does. It makes us different people. Resurrection is that reminder that the last word hasn't been spoken. Resurrection is a reminder that the realities of death, pain, loss, grief, failure don't have the last word. Systems of injustice, and bigotry of oppression – don't have the last word. If you find yourself on the oppressive end of addiction, illness, bullying – take hope, because Resurrection is the last word.

But here is the reality. Resurrection always costs something. There has to be death in order for a Resurrection - and death is hard. Sometimes we'd

rather hold on to fear and never ride that bike. Sometimes we'd rather hold on to that substance and remain addicted. Sometimes we'd rather hold on to a lifestyle we cannot afford and remain in financial difficulty. Sometimes we'd rather hold onto an abusive relationship and remain unhealthy. For Resurrection to happen – to truly become a different person – where new life flows - it always costs something.

It's one of the reasons why we humans would rather go for resuscitation than Resurrection. Resuscitation doesn't cost us much. It's one of the reasons why New Year's resolutions fail because most New Year's resolutions are not Resurrections – they are simply a resuscitation of our former selves. Resuscitations bring us back from the brink only to leave us in a constant cycle of needing more resuscitation.

Let me be really practical. I struggle with weight loss. And over the years I have gone through a series of resuscitations – we call them diets. But I never fully experience the death of bad habits so I have yet to experience resurrection in that area of my life. But I believe that Resurrection has the last word and so I remain hopeful.

Here is another example. I had a conversation with a woman who has a very toxic and unhealthy relationship with her mom and that toxicity bleeds over into other areas and other relationships in her life. She feels guilty about letting that relationship die so she can experience resurrection but instead she continues to try to resuscitate that relationship.

Does that kind of thing sound familiar in any of our lives? Resurrection comes at a cost, even the death of a relationship so that you and I can have new life. Resurrection always has the last word. So, on this Easter day – where in your life do you need a new creation? What in you needs to die in order for you to live resurrection? The invitation to you, to me, to all of us is to enact resurrection life – right now. It's time to take off the training wheels and ride.