

“Love Is Come Again”

1 Peter 3:8-9

We are singing one of the lesser known Easter hymns today, Hymn #247 in our Glory to God hymnal. In its original version from the Episcopal hymnal the first verse has the original archaic language:

*Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.*

How many of you have noticed the grass lately. Is it growing yet in the lawn where you live? Has it woken from winter where you live? Has your irritating neighbor compulsively gotten his lawn mower out yet to mow down the first few microns of new grass or is that you?

Growth takes time. It is the constructive power of love that causes us to grow! It is love that prompts us to pause and notice the grass growing. It is love that lifted us up from the brown grass on the yard and inspired us to do something constructive. It is love that makes all of us older without losing our youth. It is love that resurrects us. Easter is more than a day, yes a season, to remember that the resurrection is not magic. The resurrection takes time to grow in us, and it can take some time to notice.

For us today, Easter is not just the one day that Jesus rises from the grave. Easter is any day, every day, the day that whenever we pause, we pause to realize that someone is rising from the grave all the time. Someone can rise from the dead every day; we just don't usually pause to recognize it every day.

Just as wonderfully and gloriously and carefully as the grass is growing every day under our very feet, resurrection is happening again every day. And resurrection happens in us every day, every time we let love construct something in us. Love is rising every day, carefully and gloriously constructed in the amazing grace of God.

All of today's lectionary readings put forth one common theme on this second Sunday of Easter—On the Second Sunday of Easter, the church continues to live in the light of resurrection—not as a past event, but as a present reality shaping faith, witness, and community. We follow a living Jesus, not an ancient relic of history.

We see from where we stand and we are standing post-resurrection. That is why when Thomas missed out on the first resurrection appearance of Jesus with the other disciples when he saw Jesus a week later, all it took was just one look—when Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas could see the evidence right standing right before him and did not need to put his finger in the holes in his hands are from the nails that held him to the Cross where he was crucified. Peter testified to this in his speech in the Book of Acts:

Fellow Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having released him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

Jesus is alive. Jesus is alive and we are his 21st Century witnesses to this. John MacLeod Campbell Crum was a witness to this when he penned the final verse of his Easter hymn, *Now the Green Blade Riseth*:

*When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again,  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.*

It has been a long winter, hasn't it? Another new war for our country... Isn't time that love comes back again? Isn't time that we love our neighbor as ourselves? Isn't time we welcome the alien rather than hunting them down? Isn't time that we rise from the grave of our own complacency?

Robert McAfee Brown was a Presbyterian minister, theologian, and yes, an activist. He lived in a different time in the mid-20th Century. In a talk given five years after the end of the Vietnam War he said, **“Where we stand determines what we see. Who we listen to determines what we hear. What we see and hear determines our actions and who we are.”**

He went on to say that as educated and privileged Americans we needed to stand with the poor, listen to the poor and unprivileged and take action to make a difference. This is what Jesus did. This is what we must do as we follow him post-resurrection.

Many of us here have experienced standing with the poor, speaking out against injustice and spending our lives trying to make a difference. Perhaps some of in these past few weeks and months have done this. Not only do we stand and rise for our own convictions, but how important it is to stand where we can see from another's perspective and listen to those who speak of God's presence and call in a very polarized and sometimes crazy world today?

If we want Love to come again to our world again we must stand and take action to make a difference.

Peter writes to Gentile Christians who may feel uncertain of their place within God's story. Drawing on language traditionally associated with Israel's inheritance, Peter reassures them that, in Christ, they are fully included in the family of God. They are not second-class members of the people of God. In Jesus, they belong.

It's only in Jesus we belong to God's Kingdom. That is what Peter is saying. This is our inheritance too. This is our inheritance to share—not a person, not a political party, not a particular nation. It is only the post-resurrected Jesus that gives us our identity and purpose!

This inheritance, Peter insists, is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading – kept in heaven for them. It does not change with every election cycle or with the Dow Jones or even your A1C test. **Unlike earthly security, which can decay or be taken away, this post-Easter inheritance we have been given cannot spoil or fade.** It is spiritual in nature, grounded in resurrection life, and guaranteed by God's faithfulness rather than human effort:

*Although you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 3:8-9, NRSV)*

It is like this... although Peter's readers have not seen Jesus, they love Him. Though they do not see Jesus now, they believe in Him and rejoice with an inexpressible and glorious joy. This is resurrection faith lived in the present tense—a faith sustained by trust rather than sight, and by joy rather than certainty.

Friends, on this Second Sunday of Easter, 1 Peter reminds us that the risen Christ gives more than forgiveness or future hope. He gives a new identity, a new family, and a living hope that sustains disciples as they follow Jesus in a complex and often costly world.

Peter is realistic about suffering. Faith, he acknowledges, can be tested; just as gold is refined by fire. Yet even here, Easter reframes our experience. Trials do not negate faith; they reveal its genuineness. Suffering is not the final word, nor is it meaningless. Complacency is not the final word either. Instead, suffering in this world becomes a place where faith is deepened and hope clarified. Though we may suffer and struggle, **Where we stand does determine what we see. Who we listen to determines what we hear. What we see and hear determines our actions and who we are. Love is come again in the resurrected Jesus.**

Reverend Dr. James D. Hegedus  
Mason First Presbyterian Church  
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