

Leader Telegram Faith Walks Article  
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Easter makes me think of resurrection. New life. Jesus' defeat of death by rising from the dead, leaving his faithful disciples – the women, as it turns out – to discover an empty tomb then later the risen Christ. It was a profound day, bringing God's message of love for all of her creation, including all of his people made in the divine image, male and female.

There is more to the story, however, than just an empty tomb and a risen savior. The resurrection is a pretty amazing story of God's love, but knowing what led up to it makes God's radically generous love even more amazing.

It began Thursday night when Jesus gathered with his disciples for what became his final meal. Fairly normal, but this time astounding because Jesus knew that his disciple Judas planned to betray him and set in motion a process that would end in Jesus' crucifixion. But Jesus invited him to the table anyway! Jesus also knew that by the morning, Peter would three times deny knowing Jesus. But Jesus included him in the meal, too! Knowing full well their coming betrayals (because of it, probably), Jesus still shared the bread and wine of this first communion with both. Knowing that gives me hope. Our perfection is not required. God's love has nothing to do with who we are, and everything to do with God, who is the source of love.

It's that love that brings Jesus to invite us to his table just as we are, in shabby or tattered clothing, wounds in our souls deep and painful, trails of pain or destruction left behind us. Just as we are. No conditions. Surely if Jesus' heart was big enough to feed Judas and Peter, it is big enough for you and me. And if it is big enough for us, it is big enough for our neighbors, no matter our opinion of them, because Christ's economy is love, not condemnation, "leaving behind", or tests of right belief, whatever that is anyway.

Christianity proclaimed as a system of believing or doing the right thing to guarantee "getting to heaven" (or the earthly prosperity gospel equivalent, becoming wealthy), darkens it into a shadow version that is more about us and our power, and not what God has done and who God is. And what God has done is promise recklessly generous love for all her creation, for all his people, regardless of belief, actions, or even our awareness of its existence.

This Eastertide, I pray in hope that you will know the love of Easter, even if you call it by another name, or if you are a confused believer or a non-believer, or you have doubts about a few or many things. May you at least be sure of one thing: that whoever you are, whatever you have done or not done, you are loved and you matter.

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extra stuff:

Easter becomes more amazing when seen how it comes from human failure. We probably all

know failure's sting as both committers and victims. The good news is that our failure is not a terminus.

[[Unfortunately some feel the need to put up walls or fence God in so that God may be protected from the unworthy. ]]

It is not winning or (singling someone out for specialness - crap - what is that word!!!! triumphalism isn't quite it; ) or "right belief".

Jesus did end up being arrested because of Judas. And while Jesus was on trial, Peter did manage to deny three times that he knew Jesus. In fact, other than the women, all of Jesus' disciples disappeared and abandoned him. And yet... and yet...

There is the story of why

By God's infinite mercy, forgiveness, and grace, we all share in that promise.

Which seems to me a pretty clear example that our communion tables ought to be open to all who wish to be fed and given drink. Jesus said, "Come all who hunger, and come all who thirst." He didn't say to first go read a book, or profess this belief, or take this test, or become perfect.

There would be no Sunday morning empty tomb without Thursday night betrayal and Friday crucifixion.