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Luke 24:1-12

In Jesus' resurrection, we celebrate our God whose powerful Spirit has been unleashed in our world! Who will not let sin and death have the final word in our world. Whose movement creates new life. Whose breath enlivens us all. We rejoice in God's powerful love and life – which opens our tombs and brings us real hope.

When the women arrived at Jesus' tomb, they found things in disarray. The stone was rolled away. The body was gone. There were two strange men in dazzling clothes. You can understand why the women were perplexed and terrified. "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

We would be just as startled and confused. Would it not be horrifying to find a loved one's grave disturbed? We live with expectations that what we know will not change. Of all things, we can count on death and taxes, right? What is dead will stay dead and should stay wrapped up, as it was when we left. What is dead should remain lifeless and predictable. That's only realistic, right?

And there are lots of things that seem to be broken, signs of death in our lives:

- Broken or dysfunctional relationships;
- Injustice or prejudice;
- Abuse;
- Addiction;

- Endless economic troubles;
- Physical or mental health illnesses.

Often it seems that these situations – or people – will never change. It seems that we can't lose the sin and the death that surrounds us. We may not focus on it, but we are all mourning to some degree. Mourning the lost hopes and dreams that we had for an earthly life set free from sin and death. Like the women, we see walk around the graves of our dead longings. We honor them with our version of burial spices, We cluck our tongues with disapproval at the world. Or we try to figure out the best way to live amid the brokenness. We say goodbye to any real expectations for change in our lives.

For many of us, what we hear of Jesus is a beautiful story. But we often think of us like our dead dreams. The stories have been told. Maybe some will be inspired for the next day. Nothing new will happen.

Today we hear of the miraculous resurrection of one man. But we are not in a history class or celebrating Memorial Day. We are not remembering stories or people of the past that helped us be here today. The men in dazzling clothes called the women and call us to face a different reality. “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”

In Jesus Christ, God reveals a BIG sign of the new creation that is in process! God's power and life will not be bound by sin and death. The Spirit breathed new life into Christ. And God continues to breathe new life in and around us. Our Easter celebration reminds us of God's hope and plan for us and our world. The Easter gospel wakens us to the reality of God's work around us. It startles us to open our eyes and hearts. It holds before us the wonders of God, and invites us to receive – and welcome – the new life that God brings to us as baptized children of God. We are given new life in the waters of baptism, as we celebrated at the beginning of worship. Yet the Spirit is dwelling with us and recreating us for the rest of our lives.

Last year's Pixar movie, "Up" is a story about such recreation and new life. Jesus doesn't appear – and I don't think his name is mentioned at all. It's a tale of an elderly man, Mr. Fredricksen, who had a full life with his wife. It was a good life of many years together. When they were young, they shared dreams – many of which were unrealized. They did not have children, they did not travel on adventures far away. After her death, Mr. Fredricksen is paralyzed by grief. He grieves her death, and their lost life together. He mourns the dreams that they did not fulfill. It is hard for him to continue. He wants to stop time, keep the world from turning.

For this man, it seemed that life stopped. When it seems that he is stuck, the Spirit moves in. A new friend, a child, knocks on his door and adopts him. A fantastic, wonderful, impossible adventure begins. He realizes that, amid the death of what was, there are new invitations for life. He receives of a relationship with a child, like they were never able to have in their family. Mr. Fredrickson is born anew. It is new birth that honors who he is – his true loves, his dreams, and the wonderful life from before.

Yes, it's a cartoon. (and a cool one at that!) In it, as in our scriptures, we see a reflection of ourselves. Our attachment to dead things in our lives may keep us closed God's creating power. And it's not just that we should use the power of positive thinking. God does not tell us to "Live Your Best Life," in the way of Oprah. It's not about us doing more. It's not about us making ourselves different.

Christ's resurrection shows that God is alive and active and powerful in our lives! We live in a world that is being renewed. Easter is an invitation for us to see the stones rolled away in our own lives. To feel the rush of the Spirit's breath moving around us. And to know that, united with Christ Jesus, God springs us to eternal life. Here and now, and forever more.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!