

# "Enjoying the Resurrection" by Doug Wysockey-Johnson

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by Doug Wysockey-Johnson

Seekers Church

Easter Sunday, April 16, 2006

## Enjoying the Resurrection

[This sermon was given from an outline. The outline is collected here.]

**I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO PREACH THIS  
MORNING**

\*It has provided the opportunity to dwell deeply in the story of Christ's death and resurrection.

\*Life makes it difficult to participate fully in the rich services and rituals that happen in this season. (Though I

have been doing my own personal version of the 'stations of the cross' these holy days:

**Station 1:** Our home, with the 'For Sale' sign out front. Trying to keep it clean with two young children underfoot;

**Station 2:** was taking our visiting niece and nephew to the Air and Space Museum this Thursday, when approx. half of all adolescents in the United States were in that museum;

**Station 3:** Was Friday at CVS, to pick up the medication for both children's ear infections;

**Station 4:** Was Saturday AM, 12-3am, in our bathroom, as Isabel had a reaction to the medication....

You get the idea. Each of us has our own little stations of the cross we could name, many more serious and heavy than the ones I have named.

**IT IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT TO SAY THAT EASTER SUNDAY IS AN EXCITING DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

\*We wear ties, dresses and hats who do not normally wear hats. Special breakfasts happen. Chocolate is bought. Trumpets are dusted off for 'Christ the Lord is Risen today...'

\*At a deeper level, it is the day we celebrate Jesus Christ's victory over sin and death and evil. It is at the absolute center of the Christian Faith:

*"the resurrection of Jesus from the dead nearly two thousand years ago is the most important and hopeful event in human and cosmic history"* (M. Kelsey)

\*It is a big deal, dealing with very serious matters. Serious matters 2000 years ago, and serious matters today, like death, suffering, evil and hopelessness.

**IN SPITE OF THIS (OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THIS) WHAT HAS STRUCK ME THIS WEEK ABOUT JESUS RESURRECTION IS HOW MUCH FUN HE SEEMS TO BE HAVING.**

\*In the midst of all the "Do not be afraid"s, and 'Do not cling to me because I have not yet ascended to my Father', is Jesus, consistently, enjoying this.

## **BIBLE AND RESURRECTION APPEARANCES**

\*In John's gospel, Jesus appears to Mary, but in disguise. She thinks she is talking to a gardener. (Barbara Brown Taylor points out that hopefully Jesus found some gardener clothes over by the fertilizer and rake, because otherwise she was at a **naked** gardener, since his linen wrappings were still in the

tomb)

\*Later in John's gospel he encounters the disciples who are fishing, he again is disguised: "Have you caught anything yet?" he asks. No, they respond. 'Well, maybe you should try the other side of the boat' (I picture him turning to us the audience, and winking)

\*In Luke, an angel says to Mary, 'why do you look for the living among the dead'. Not hard to imagine that line being delivered with a smile.

\*Later on the Emmaus Rd. Jesus again appears to two travelers, discussing with great heaviness and maybe hopelessness the death of Christ. Jesus shows up (again disguised) 'Hey. What are you talking about?' Are you the only one around who does not know what is going on? 'What things'. He is stretching this out. He is enjoying it.

\*Later still in Luke may be my favorite resurrection moment. The followers are still huddled in the room, but now there are reports from the Emmaus travelers and others that he has been appearing. Suddenly there he is! He delivers Jesus type lines: "Peace be with you...Look at my hands and feet, see that it is I myself." While in their joy they were disbelieving, and still wondering, he says to them: (big moment) **"Do you have anything to eat?"** They gave it to him and he 'ate it in their presence'. Can you see the looks in their faces as he munched on the food?

**AT THE CENTER OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN HISTORY, THERE IS  
PLAY. JOY. DELIGHT. FUN.**

**I SUSPECT THAT THE RESURRECTED CHRIST IS INVITING ME TO  
LIGHTEN UP A BIT THIS WEEK.**

\*As Frederick Buechner says, to “get the joke.”

\*Not ignoring or pretending that it is not stressful to sell a house; not to diminish the grief and transition we are living into in the FAW office.

\*But also not to let those Stations of the Cross become so heavy that I cannot see

Jesus in disguise, playing hide and seek with me. Inviting me in to this incredible cosmic joke that has just been played.

KRISTER STENDAHL, EX PROFESSOR OF HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL AND BISHOP OF STOCKHOLM SAID IT WELL:

“So let us lighten it up. It may well be that Jesus said much of his words with a smile. Joy is closer to God than seriousness. Why? Because when I am serious I tend to be self centered, but when I am joyful I tend to forget myself”

### **FOUNTAIN OF JOY AND PLAY**

On Wednesday of this past week I had a Spiritual Direction appt. (The appt. was actually Tuesday, but I totally missed

it. Tells you a bit about my preoccupied state.)

\*My day had not been playful. I was stewing and anxious about some of my stations of the cross.

\*We had to meet at an alternative place, because my director is having work done on her house. That alternative place was St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church. I drive by this church every day on my way to work. I do not like it. It is gray and fortress-like, and has a big in your face pro life-sign on the lawn.

\*I entered, and in the waiting area, there was a big sign that said, 'Precious Blood Pastoral Center'. Great. I hated the room we were borrowing. Nothing was happening.

The tomb was sealed.

\*Then all the sudden, my SD said, 'Come here. I want to show you something'. We walked through a maze of hallways, and came to a doorway. We walked through it, and almost Narnia-like, we entered a central courtyard. It had a few trees; a few peace totems; flowers in their spring glory; and a wonderful fountain gurgling and bubbling in the center. We sat on a bench. My mood began to shift right before my eyes...

\*She said, "My friend who works here worked to worked to get this put in." It is a peace garden.

\*We talked a bit longer...then I went to the fountain. It was marvelous. Moreover, I thought of our son Soren, who loves fountains almost more than anything. He can sniff them out blocks away, and when he gets sight of it, he shouts 'Bubble!'

\*My SD dipped her hand in the water, and made the sign of the cross on my forehead. I took a piece of seaglass from the fountain (**some times you need to throw something into a fountain, sometimes you need to take something out.**) I have carried it with me since Wed. as a reminder to look for the risen Christ around me.)

\*Somehow, that fountain has become an image of the playful Christ this season, a Christ who invites me to participate in the resurrection by relaxing a bit. Lightening up. To trust that the victory has been won. That joy is closer to God than seriousness.

**THERE IS ANOTHER IMAGE I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THESE DAYS THIS ONE FROM NARNIA.**

\*it is from the Chronicles of Narnia, CS Lewis' children's books. Specifically from 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. Aslan is the great lion king of Narnia, who willingly gave up his life in exchange for a boy named Edmund.

\*Edmund's sisters, Lucy and Susan have stayed with Aslan as he was put to death on the great stone table. Here is where I would like to pick up the story: [read from p. 131]

## CLOSE

\*This morning I am grateful for many things:

–for fountains of living water that bubble and gurgle that delight my son always, and me if I have the eyes to see;

–for a beautiful day that was supposed to be cold and rainy...

–but mostly for the ‘deep magic’ we celebrate today, that has the power to

bring hope out of hopelessness;

bring laughter where there were once tears;

bring courage where there was fear;

bring overly serious people like myself to romp a bit.

AMEN

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