

Thresholds

Imagine, if you would, the first Easter morning. It's still dark. The stone slowly begins to roll back, and the radiance of the glory of the risen Christ shines out over the threshold of the tomb dispelling the darkness. This may have been the image that inspired the Apostle John to write: ***"In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*** John 1:4-5

We know that the threshold is the bottom sill in a doorway, Webster also defines threshold as a point of beginning. Certainly Christ's resurrection on the first Easter morning qualifies. Jesus leaves over the threshold of the tomb and the world is on the threshold of new beginnings. Christ died on the cross for our sins, and he was raised from the tomb that we might have new life in him. This is the Easter Celebration. The light cannot be put out. The victory over evil won; not even death can stop God's purpose in redeeming humanity.



Christ's death and resurrection offer us the promise of both God's Kingdom and kingdom life. By faith in Christ we trust Christ's death has opened the threshold to eternal life; we too will be raised at the resurrection on Christ's return to live in his presence forevermore. But let's not overlook the promise of new life in Christ available to us today. Paul says: ***"And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ***

from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8:11) Thus, the Spirit supports us with the power of the risen Christ that we can be peace in the midst of conflict, love in the midst of hate, patient in suffering, and hope in all circumstances.

There are many thresholds to experience Christ's presence and be empowered by the Spirit. Wesley calls these "Means of Grace" including the practices of Worship, Prayer, Meditation, Study of Scripture, Christian Fellowship, Financial Giving, Fasting, Simple Living, and Solitude. These thresholds continue to transform us more and more into the likeness of Christ. Last month's newsletter touched on these. In this edition of the newsletter we look at how to begin the practice of prayer. See our Web Site or ask me for more detailed information on these spiritual disciplines as pathways to a deeper relationship in Christ.

But let's not lose sight of the mission of the church, the transformation of the world. If Easter teaches us anything, it teaches us God is always opening the thresholds of His kingdom to all.

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.” Revelation 3:20.

The church is called to be the threshold of Christ’s kingdom in the world. The Church is where the world can experience the reality of Christ’s love and find hope. Thus, Worship, Prayer, Meditation, Study of Scripture, Christian Fellowship, Financial Giving, Fasting, Simple Living, and Solitude are also to be employed to reach out beyond our walls of the church into the community that we can share the experience together

What thresholds are we willing to cross with Jesus? Are we willing to cross the thresholds of our comfort zone and do things in new ways? Are we willing to cross economic thresholds to not only to help the poor but to walk with them in their struggle? Are we willing to cross the thresholds of intimidation and fear for social justice? Are we willing to cross thresholds of culture, of race, gender and sexuality? Of the rights of the unborn? Of.... ?

Our Charge is on the threshold of new beginnings. As our ministries continue to grow we are in need of larger, more accessible, culturally relevant facilities. The Lord is offering a vision for a property where we can grow in ministry to the community and grow together. Can you see it? Are we willing to follow in faith, trusting the Lord goes before us to open the doors to the ministries needed in the valley and the resources to expand the kingdom?

Our Charge is in need of new spiritual formation small groups; bible studies, support groups, fellowship groups, prayer groups. The Lord is calling folks on our charge with vision over thresholds of fear to organize and lead these groups. Will we respond?

There are other thresholds in the Resurrection story. The women crossed the thresholds of where they stayed and they encountered angels and met the risen Christ. But the disciples were behind sealed thresholds for fear of the Jewish leaders. Thomas was sealed behind the threshold of doubt, closing his mind to the truth, saying only if I see the nail marks in his hands will I believe.

The only thing that can keep us from the new life empowered by the Resurrection and the ability to reach those at risk of missing the Kingdom, is our unwillingness to trust Jesus as the threshold to new life and step over the thresholds of the opportunities he presents to us.

The Easter question for each of us is: am I willing to cross thresholds with Jesus?

That we might know Christ and the power of his resurrection,

Pastor Duane