



DATE	March 27, 2016
SPEAKER	David Smith
TITLE	Easter at Fairhaven
SERIES	God the Father could have just let us see Himself, but instead He sent Jesus as a human to reveal the Father to us. Didn't see that coming! Then Jesus was baptized. But isn't baptism an outward sign of an inward spiritual change? Didn't see that coming! Jesus' mission was to be our King and Savior, but He rode a donkey and died disgracefully. Didn't see that coming! And then there was the resurrection. Nobody saw that coming! What does all this mean?

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 because of his Spirit who lives in you. (Romans 8:11, NIV)

Icebreaker (choose one):

- What is your earliest Easter memory, or...
- Which commercialized symbol of Christian holidays affected you most as a child: Easter bunny, Santa Claus, leprechauns, others?

Digging Deeper:

1. We are not simply supposed to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. God intends for us to "experience" it. Romans 8:11 tells us that God's Spirit lives in Christ-followers now, providing a better future and a better NOW. What do you think about your own coming resurrection? How does that promised future experience reframe your present situation? What area of your life do you need to experience the power of the resurrection today?
2. David reviewed three individuals whose responses to Jesus' resurrection are recorded in John 20. Discuss what each of these individuals experienced through Jesus' resurrection:
 - a. (John 20:1-2, 11-16) Mary experienced HOPE. Jesus had delivered her from demons. But now she thought he was dead, and to make matters worse, someone had taken his body. She was hopeless and confused. Then Jesus met her and called her by name. Have you ever heard God "call your name" as you walked hopelessly and aimlessly?
 - b. (John 20:8) John experienced CLARITY. John already believed. He had walked with Jesus for 3 years, but the resurrection made it crystal clear. Have you ever had a moment of great clarity with God as you saw Him do what only He is able to do?
 - c. (John 20:28) Thomas experienced CERTAINTY. He was doubting, even willfully skeptical. He needed to see in order to believe. Have you had a moment in time when you knew God was demonstrating the depth of who He is to you?
3. Which of the disciple(s) in the resurrection narrative would you have most liked to walk beside as they experienced Jesus' resurrection? Why?
 - a. the women at the tomb (John 20:1-2, 11-16; or Mark 16:1-13)
 - b. Peter (John 20:3-10)
 - c. John (John 20:3-10)
 - d. Thomas (John 20:24-29)
 - e. the men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13ff)

4. David said that the very presence of Jesus changed things for Mary. He asserted that the presence of God is “profound.” How has the presence of God made a difference in your life? Read Psalm 139:7-12. Talk about how the presence of God can bring hope and comfort.

Application:

5. Take a minute to share with your group: Which do you most need in your life: Hope, clarity, or certainty? Why? Have you personally experienced Jesus bringing hope, clarity, or certainty in your life? What did that look like?
6. David spoke about the role of faith in our lives. Read Hebrews 11:1-2. What is faith, and how can it help us to live closer to God?
7. Ponder the response God may be calling you to this Easter.
 - a. Repent: have you been walking in circles, going down a dead end road? Do you need to stop what you're doing and seek the hope found in God? (read: Zephaniah 3:17; II Cor 4:16-18; I Peter 1:3)
 - b. Surrender: Are things unclear, out of focus in your life? Do you need clarity? What is it that you may need to surrender to God? Do you need to know that God is able to do what He says He can do? (read: Numbers 23:19; Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Romans 4:21)
 - c. Commit: do doubts hold you back from committing yourself fully to this relationship with God? What are you unsure or doubting about? In what way do you need to know that He is who He claims to be? Discuss how you can move toward God even as you work through your doubts. (read: I John 4:14; Philippians 2:5-7; John 6:40)