

BUT! Luke 24:1-12

Easter morning, 2010

It seems many times like we live our lives on Saturday. Jesus died on Friday and rose on Sunday. The new creation God promised is on its way, it's broken into the world and is working its amazing love in so many ways to bring wholeness to people. But as we see in the story, in our story there are days when all seems lost as it did for Jesus' disciples...That day between the crucifixion and the resurrection.

We see and live in a world full of chips and dents and scars. Even where we have glued it back together you still see the cracks, but in its own way, a mended work of art is a testament to the God who is willing to work with broken pieces as we see clearly in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and calls us to do the same.

This is a story with everything human in it (promise, failure, blame, guilt, forgiveness, healing, hope, a story about us and a story about our God, who did not create us once but goes on creating us forever, putting our pieces back together so that we are never ruined, never entirely, and never for good.

Whenever God's people gather around the altar to be fed, they do roughly the same thing. First they hear the biblical story, their story, and then they pray, and then somebody holds up the bread.

And the person breaks the bread, reminding us that our wholeness does not lie behind us but ahead of us, in the company of the resurrected Lord who made us, who feeds us and clothes us, and dwells among us until he can bring us home.

And as testimony to that there is one word that runs through all the Easter scriptures. That word BUT! It's a word that shouldn't be there. It means that there is something more to come.

Last Sunday's scripture ended with the end: "He breathed his last", THE END. There was a brief eulogy offered by of all people a Roman Centurion: "Certainly this man was innocent." Fine thought, but now of course, too late. "And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight when they saw what had taken place, returned home, beating their breasts. And all the people who had followed Him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things." THE END. But for a paragraph as to what has to happen next, the funeral arrangements. THE END, you know, involves not merely DEAD, but dead and buried. Then they all went home, the story ENDS, FOR IT WAS THE SABBATH.

BUT....St. Luke goes on surprisingly.....that word does not belong, nor does the sentence it begins, not yet the paragraph. BUT... AND HEADS MUST TURN AND EYES WIDEN, HEARTS SKIP A BEAT, BECAUSE THE STORY GOES ON.

But on the first day of the week.
But they found the stone rolled away
But when they went in they did not find the body.

And then we are told by two men in dazzling apparel...He is not here, but has risen.

Peter told the story just that way, with the surprising participle: They put him to death by hanging him on a tree...BUT...God raised Him on the third day and made Him manifest.

There was St. Paul's grand announcement to the sad Corinthians who were afraid their hope in Christ would last no longer than this life and be snuffed out in death: BUT.in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

That one words changes everything. The way one day changes everything! Try the word on, as you deal with your heartaches, the disappointments, death, your own and those you love. The story always comes to a conclusion, sooner or later, THE END. But in Christ, God in his mercy answers, always, BUT..AND THE STORY GOES ON.

Even to concerns as serious as the younger brother when he says. I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN AND IN YOUR SIGHT, I AM NO LONGER WORTHY TO BE CALLED YOUR SON, END OF STORY. BUT the father says to the servants bring quickly the best robe and put it on him, and the story goes on.

BUT...God shows his love for us while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, BUT ...have eternal life.

We are alerted to the fact that the story, the life should stop, BUT means it doesn't. The whole story of Christ's life, death and resurrection hinges on that little participle.

It was Friday: It was Friday and Jesus was dead on a tree, BUT THAT WAS ONLY FRIDAY....AND SUNDAY CAME.

It was Friday: and Mary was crying her eyes out. The disciples were running for their lives in every direction, like sheep without a shepherd, BUT THAT WAS ONLY FRIDAY, AND SUNDAY CAME.

It was Friday...the cynics were looking at the world and saying, As things have been so shall they be. You can't change anything in this world: But those cynics didn't know that it was only Friday...AND SUNDAY CAME.

It was Friday! And on Friday, those forces that oppress people and make them suffer were in control but those forces didn't know that it was only Friday, BUT SUNDAY CAME.

It was Friday! And on Friday, Pilate thought he had washed his hands of a lot of trouble. The Pharisees were strutting around laughing and poking each other in the ribs, they thought they were back in charge of everything. BUT THEY DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS ONLY FRIDAY, BUT SUNDAY CAME.

If we sought one word to tell the truth of Easter, Alleluia might well summarize the spirit of it all.

The word risen might do too, and so might life or victory. Yet for this Easter, try this strange little word on for size, and for surprise, the message of the day. That little word BUT!

That's the Good News. That's the word the world is waiting to hear. That But after what they think is THE END, FOR ALL PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS IN LIFE. Because of that little word tied to that Easter Sunday AND THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, we can say to people today, or any day in which life feels like the events of Friday, it's only Friday! BUT SUNDAY'S COMING.

When they are psychologically depressed, we have to tell them, IT'S ONLY Friday, but Sunday's coming.

When they are driven into the ground in guilt, sorrow, sin and shame, even then it's only Friday..BUT SUNDAY'S COMING.

When they feel they can never know love again, we've got to tell them. IT'S ONLY FRIDAY, BUT SUNDAY'S COMING.

When people have lost their belief in the miraculous so that they no longer expect great things from God, we've got to tell them IT'S ONLY FRIDAY, BUT SUNDAY'S COMING

Try this word on your tombstone, yours at last or that of one you love. Where the dates appear, there are always two dates: birth, the beginning, and death, the end. See one more thing engraved there, after that second, final date, because OF OUR Lord's resurrection God's little unexpected Easter Word made out by Him who on that day rose from the dead so that our story might continue in Him. Look for it there on the tombstone after the second date, it's only Friday...BUT SUNDAY'S COMING!

Joy in the Christ Life,
Rev. David E. Hinck, Pastor FGS