

Thank you for a wonderful Holy Week Celebration and Resurrection Sunday. All your efforts made this a truly special season.

As I was pondering this past week I began to read some “post-resurrection” blogs. Keith Boyette’s post resonated with my thoughts, here is a taste of his insights. Blessings

This year was a very different Holy Week and Easter for me. For the first time since 1995, I was not serving a local church and preaching at multiple services. Although disorienting, I found the change had its benefits - wonderful time to worship God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, special time spent with family, and the opportunity to step back and observe the power of God at work in others and within me.

John Wesley frequently commented on his experiences of Easter in his journals. On one occasion, he wrote, “April 15 - (Being Easter-Day.) I preached, morning and evening; but my voice was so weak, it could scarce be heard.” Wesley’s experience may be ours in the aftermath of Easter 2017. If we have been deployed in ministry, we may be experiencing depletion, even exhaustion.

Nevertheless, I am reminded that the power was never derived from us in the first place. If anything, significant or fruitful emerges from the journey of the past week, it is because the Holy Spirit has moved in power. Writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul declares, “I came to you in weakness - timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this, so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:3-5).

In recent weeks, I have prayed for you - laity and clergy - that God would pour out His Spirit to empower you to accomplish what only God can accomplish in and through you. As I have prayed, I have had the assurance that God was going to do exactly that. I love to hear the stories of what God has done.

In his journal entry for June 23, 1761, Wesley recounts one woman’s testimony: “After meeting the society I talked with a sensible woman, whose experience seemed peculiar. She said, ‘A few days before Easter last I was deeply convinced of sin, and in Easter week I knew my sins were forgiven and was filled with “joy and peace in believing.” But in about eighteen days I was convinced, in a dream, of the necessity of a higher salvation; and I mourned day and night, in agony of desire to be thoroughly sanctified, till, on the twenty-third day after my justification, I found a total change, together with a clear witness that the blood of Jesus had cleansed me from all unrighteousness.’” Praise God!

Joy in her voice, and excitement in her soul, these were “hallmarks” of a transformed life!

Boyette continues...

Isn’t that what we long for in our lives and through our ministries! As Paul shared with the Corinthians, each of us has a role in the story being written. “After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God’s servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered, but it was God who made it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:5-6).

Most of our churches swell to overflowing on Easter Sunday. Few of us engaged in ministry leave anything unexpended. We have offered all of ourselves to the One who is worthy of all that we have. Then the week after arrives. We are exhausted. What's next? Can any more be offered?

Now we, servants of the Living God, have the opportunity to harvest the fruit that emerges from Easter. The God for whom nothing is impossible by the power of the Spirit is doing a new thing in the lives of all those who have encountered the Risen Christ on Easter Sunday. Do not be surprised if persons who you thought came to Easter services simply because it was what was expected are seized by the Spirit of God and radically transformed. Realize that that which may seem to be dormant to you is about to burst forth like the intensity of new life in the spring after a long, harsh winter.

God is about to do a new thing in the lives of those who thought they were beyond God's love and grace. May we have the faith to believe, the eyes to see, and hearts ready to receive. Yes, it is the week after Easter . . . but God is still raising the dead to life. Behold, the fruit God bears in our lives.

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Fruit that is what we seek after a winter. Fruit which nourishes, sanctifies, transforms, seeds sprout and now prepare for the harvest that is coming, can you see it? See you in Church on Sunday!

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From Oakwood United Methodist Church, Lubbock, Texas