

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

Rise Up!

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Pastor Judy Howard Peterson

artisanchurch.com

[Music Intro]

[Male voice] The following is a presentation of Artisan Church in Rochester, New York.

[Voice of Pastor Scott]

It was a little chaotic but you may have noticed in the Easter story that I tried to tell the children earlier that the first witness to the resurrection was a woman. Women in all the accounts (of the story) are the first witnesses and they are the first proclaimers of this event. What I mean to say is that women are the first evangelists in the Bible. It doesn't really say it in the John passage that we'll hear the Gospel proclaimed from today, but in the other tellings of this story in the other gospels we find out that the women proclaim this news and guess what? The men don't believe them. And know this will be hard to hard to believe. Luke 24: 11 they did not believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Every woman in the room knows exactly how they felt. I mean that there's a chuckle in that but it's not actually all that funny in the end. Which is why I'm so happy that today we have an incredibly gifted blessed holy woman of God who will proclaim the good news of the gospel to us on Easter Sunday. I've been looking for to this for weeks and I've heard the sermon once and I am going to be sitting right there to hear all of it a second time.

Our special guest today - who you meet in just a moment - is Reverend Judy Howard Peterson who has been the campus pastor at North Park university for the past twelve years. Northpark is our denominational College and Seminary in Chicago. Pastor Judy is ordained in our denomination the ECC - the Evangelical Covenant Church. She loves God, she loves people, and she tries to keep it simple. We could all stand to emulate her in that way. She's married to a lovely man named Jeff - she did she did tell me to use that word but it's actually true - I have met Jeff he's a lovely radiant person as is Judy. I'm so glad that yesterday she was here with us here today several of us had the honor of having dinner with her last night and with her friend Marianne who's traveling with her from Sweden this weekend. I wish that you all could have been - there my living room is simply not big enough to contain all of us. But if her words this morning offer you, I would say, even half the blessing of what we received from her last night just being in the room with her and getting to know her and hearing what God is doing in her life and has done in her life... if you could get even half of that from the sermon today you're

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

going to walk out of here - or move out of here in whatever way you move - with the light bulbs in your soul every one of them lit up one hundred watts. So without further ado please join me in welcoming pastor Judy Howard Peterson to understand her.

[Voice of Pastor Judy]

Thank you. I have been having the honor of traveling preaching for twenty years and this is the absolute first time that I have been invited into somebody else's church as a woman to preach an Easter service. And so I just I want to thank you for the hospitality and just the grace of God getting to pretend. I have pastored two churches so I have preached teachers Easter services other places, but as a campus minister our students all go for the holidays and so I have always sat somewhere else for Easter. It is such a blessing to preach what is the best news, and so I may pray for me and for us.

and I'm numb and jumping because I got lots to say. Lord God and we are so grateful that this is a day in which you rise up and that we acknowledge that. I pray that you would do that to me. That you would be big and I would be so little that you would be remembered as the savior that was raised from the grave so that we might know that indeed we might rise up with you as well. I pray your spirit to chaperone the words I have to say, that each word would go to the right person. I know not all words are for everybody, but some are - I pray that they would find roots and grow and bear fruit thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what I could ever ask or imagine. I pray this in Jesus' name amen.

So let me start with this theoretically I believe in a lot of things. I totally believe people should eat healthy.

[lifts a donut out of a box and takes a bite]

I think a low sugar diet without fat and with a lot of fruits and vegetables. Theoretically. I believe this is super bad for you. I mean you should avoid processed food. Sugar flour really unhealthy I could argue with you being sugar free is the only way to go I mean look this jelly off my ham. I know all the right answers about eating healthier I believe in this kind of diet theoretically I also really believe in a limiting screen time I think you can see my blue light hang on going on my phone. I totally believe. It's my niece. I totally believe being present in your context is the absolutely theoretically anyway. She's so cute the way to go and I totally believe in forgiving people when they've wrong to me are letting people off the hook when they've made mistakes granting people a second chance even when they've hurt me. I theoretically believe this and I can quote chapter and verse about how it's done and I can be really Pastor all about forgiveness you should hear the wise counsel I offer to other people. Because I believe in

2018-04-01 *Rise Up!*

forgiving my enemies and praying for those who persecute me theoretically but when the rubber hits the road when the curtain is pulled back when the don't at the phone the enemy are all right in front of me and no one is looking let's be honest and simply say a theory sometimes is just not enough to make me want to put the don't it down turn away from the screen or turn towards my enemy.

We have a lot of things we believe theoretically that never actually get fleshed out in real life. And then I wonder do we really believe them if they have no flesh and blood? Who here hasn't boldly chimed in with a good answer, an all right answer, a bold proclamation, that if someone actually peeked behind the curtain of your beliefs look to your statistics or theories - if they boldly said "Now show me the money!" - would find that you've got no flesh and blood to back up what you just proclaimed so boldly? I mean this happens so frequently these days that life can feel like a whole lot of click bait. You know what that is - you click on a headline or something only to find it is void of any good content at all, and in fact is trying to sell you something. So it makes perfect sense that we as a culture are becoming increasingly suspicious of bold proclamations and more and more we need some good proof before we actually buy in. Truthfully I think this is no surprise to Jesus. It's why I think Jesus never asked us to just take him at his word but instead backed up his claims with flesh and blood time and time again. And there's no clearer case of this than Jesus' flesh and blood death, and then Jesus' flesh and blood resurrection. You see Jesus - he had proclaimed he would die. I mean he had said boldly "I'm going to be raised from the dead" quite a few times. Matthew 16:21 records one of those occasions. It says: *From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.*

But people are known to say all sorts of dramatic things on their way to power that they're never going to fulfill. Saying that you'll be raised back to life is actually quite different than rising from the dead after you've actually been dead. And the disciples seem to get this. The disciples seem to understand that this might not, in truth, move beyond the theoretical because each time Jesus predicts his death and resurrection the disciples only react to the real possibility of his death. They grieve and are angry - they want to fight. It's as if they never even heard the second half or never believe the possibility that he will be raised to life. But both his death and his resurrection happened. Neither the nails in his hands or him coming back from the dead were theoretical.

John 20: 1-18 *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have*

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” **3** Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. **4** The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, **7** and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples returned to their homes. **11** But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look[a] into the tomb; **12** and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. **13** They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” **14** When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Lots people struggle with this. If he was raised from the dead and it was really him how can he be unrecognizable? I just want to offer this. Jesus never had any sin in him but he always had death in him. The possibility of dying was in every single cell of his body - it was possible. And when he was raised back to life that mean he had no more death in him at all. And when you have no more death in you at all, I think you are unrecognizable compared to the person you were before. I think about what I'm going to look like if I have no sin or death. I mean, I'm thirty pounds lighter it is going to be awesome - I'm going to lose all that sin.

15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew,[b] “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” **18** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Hear me on this. Jesus, a *real* man in a *real* body, was *really* crucified, *really* dead and *really* buried. Jesus, a *real* man, had his *real* body wrapped tightly in *real* linen strips of cloth. Jesus, a *real* man, laid in a *real* tomb, *really* dead for several days. Then Jesus, a *real* dead man, in a *real* dead body, *really* sat up and *really* put his feet on the ground and *really* stood up and for *real* walked back out into life! It's really unbelievable, and as you've heard even those who first saw the empty tomb could not wrap their minds around what had happened. I mean they could

2018-04-01 *Rise Up!*

clearly see that Jesus' body was simply not in the tomb, but believing he was actually alive was a whole nother thing. It seemed unbelievable. You see, even after Jesus was raised back to life people needed a minute for their minds to catch up with the truth that the resurrection that Jesus proclaimed was not theoretical. It was not - is not - just a good story. It was not a nice belief or a spiritual truth. We as Christians believe in the actual resurrection of the body, that by the power of God a body that was once dead can be made alive again in bodily form. Hear me again. Jesus was brutalized, dead, bound up in burial cloth, buried, his dead body laid in the tomb for three days. And *after* that, he sat up, put his feet on the ground, stood up, and walked back into life.

This is not theoretical news and the fact that it is not theoretical makes it the absolute best news for so many reasons. You see, Jesus' resurrection from the dead is why we are confident that Jesus is not just a guru. Jesus not just a good teacher, not just a miracle or a nice person, but by his resurrection from the dead we believe that he was the Son of God. I mean, in his life, in ministry, don't get me wrong, understanding people's hearts and reading their minds was mesmerizing. Multiplying food had been amazing. Healing the sick had been profoundly moving. Calming the wind and the waves almost frightening, but being dead? Really dead. Crucified and buried dead, and then walking out into life? If the God of the universe did not abandon Jesus to the grave but raised him from the dead, surely Jesus must be God's son! And if the resurrection, the most unbelievable prediction and the most actually impossible claim of Jesus came to pass... then perhaps we might want to think about believing all the other things that he said and did. Jesus said God so loved the *whole world*. That means everyone, all of us, and all of whoever "them" is. I believe this statement, this unbelievable statement, because of the unbelievable resurrection. And that Jesus has living water and if I come to him I will never thirst again. I believe this unbelievably good news because I believe the unbelievable resurrection. That Jesus is the good shepherd and he will care for us and not be let us be consumed by the wolves. I believe this unbelievable good news because I believe in the unbelievable resurrection that Jesus forgives us of our sins even when we don't know what we're doing, and in fact even when we know what we're doing. I believe this unbelievably good news because I believe in the unbelievable resurrection. Jesus took upon himself all the sins of the world so we would not be crushed - so that by his wounds we could be healed. I believe this unbelievably good news because of that unbelievable resurrection. Jesus conquered death opened the way to eternal abundant life so that even if we die that doesn't get the last word, and it's not the end of the story.

I believe this because Jesus' resurrection wasn't theoretical. Jesus sat up, put his feet on the ground, stood up, and walked back out into life. Because if Jesus' most unbelievable prediction, if Jesus' most impossible claim came to pass, then I think we can begin to gain confidence in

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

every other thing that Jesus proclaimed. In our hope about the possibility of a resurrected life for all of us, it hinges on this unbelievable mighty act of God. Because the resurrection was not theoretical, we believe that whatever has been dead can be made alive again. Because Jesus didn't just state that - he was raised back to life! Can you hear the good news? The good news that Jesus is proclaiming? That not just theoretically, but in actuality, death and dying and decay, war and wounds and whatever else has robbed you of life will not get the last word. And not just theoretically, but in actuality death and dying and decay and war and wounds and whatever else is wrong with you - all of life is not going to get the last word because the resurrection is not theoretical.

I don't know how people go through life without that hope I really don't. If you believe that death and dying and war and wounds and whatever else has robbed you is getting the last word why get out of bed? Be done. What is the point? But because it's not theoretical I get out of bed. My husband and I do not have living children. We conceived eleven times and eleven times we either had a stillbirth or a miscarriage. I'm not trying to be dramatic and I have lots of people that have cared for me. I'm not looking for your sympathy, but I do want to proclaim to you that the truth that Jesus walked out of the tomb in a bodily form - that death does not get the last word - is what absolutely tethered my lovely husband and I to life when the grave was trying to bury us. I cannot imagine going through life without this hope that death will not get the last word over my deaths. And this hope is what makes it possible for us to go on, not only when the grave tries to bury us, but also when we're invited by God to lay down our lives for someone else. How can you do that if you don't believe in the resurrection? How could you even risk losing stuff if you didn't believe that it wouldn't get the last word?

This past year I felt God calling me to lay down my life for a brother. Two brothers actually. It was not a small to ask of God because I loved my life the way it was. I knew that choosing to bless these two brothers meant there would be people calling for my crucifixion (so to speak). People that would want my job, my standing in the denomination, my reputation. Many of my friends and friendships were going to be placed in the tomb. It was not an easy decision. Choosing to lay our lives down for another never is. But two things brought reassurance to me and made me courageous. The conviction that *Greater love has no one then this that they would lay down their life for another*. And two: that the resurrection is not theoretical. That no matter how much of my life I lose, God promises real life even after real death. I simply cannot imagine laying down my life for anybody without this hope. And I have to wonder as of late if the reason why we don't see more Jesus followers actually following Jesus and laying down their life is because they have forgotten that the resurrection is not theoretical. The good news

2018-04-01 *Rise Up!*

that anchors our hope is that through Jesus Christ death is not going to get the last word. There is life after any death.

Jesus was raised back to life. Let that sink in! Jesus was raised back to life. Hear the hope that's found in this tiny little phrase. Back to life - not theoretically - but Jesus was brought back to *real* life. Embodied, living, breathing, eating, loving, full community life. The apostle Paul says this: Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep first since death. Through a man the resurrection of the dead also comes to a man for as in Adam all died so in Christ all will be made alive. First fruits, they are the evidence of what is to follow. The first grape on the vine, the first apple on the harvest. First fruits are what makes the farmer like, raise his hope that there is more to come. Jesus is the first fruit. Which means he's not the last fruit, or the only fruit. That we too - you and I - can expect to be raised back to life. And not just "partial" life or "kind of sort of" life, or "just in a spiritual way" life, but raised back to a *real* life as Jesus was raised back to life. Meaning an embodied, living, breathing, eating, loving, death defying life. And I want to tell you I don't believe this is just for some day in heaven. I believe resurrection is meant for *this* day. John 10:10 Jesus says I have come that they may have life and have it to the full right now. I have come that they may have real life, an eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of - now! I have come to give them a rich and satisfying life - now! I, Jesus says, I have come that they might have life and have it in absolute abundance. We say in the creeds of the church - we said it this morning - I believe in the resurrection of the body. What if we said I believe in the resurrection of *my* body? He was only a first fruit, not the last fruit or the only fruit. And I don't believe this is just for some day. I believe the resurrection of our bodies is meant for this very day.

How many of you have ever seen a mummy? OK. When I was in third grade I was in the Minneapolis School District, and the big third grade field trip was we went to the Science Museum. Absolute chaos, you don't see anything, because this is the third grade field trip. But this was the point, you were going to go. The one thing I remember is that there was a mummy in a tiny little glass case. And the two things, the only two things that stick with me is that he was so tiny. How I was like "would have been a giant in Egypt!" ,you know, and this guy was like twenty. And the second thing I remember about this mummy is that he was wrapped so tightly grave clothes. Wound around him over and over again until his little body was all confined for all of eternity. I believe some of you are wrapped up in grave clothes. Things in this life have bound up around you that have nothing to do with the abundance that God has for you. And they are wound so tightly they're squeezing the life right out of you. And I want to proclaim to you today, on this resurrection day, that Jesus wants more for you than to be bound up for all eternity. Jesus wants you to be raised back to life! To sit up, put your feet under you, stand up, get rid of the grave clothes, and come back to life! Jesus wants for us what

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

he wanted for Lazarus, his friend who had been dead for some time. He says "Take away the stone - whatever that big thing is in front of you that is blocking you from coming back to life. Roll that away and come out of the tomb," Jesus says, "You can quit lying in those dead places you've been lying in. Can't you see a little glimmer of light coming from where the stone was rolled away? Now you gotta get up and get moving out of those that places!"

See Jesus he makes it possible for you and I to walk out of the tomb every day but he will not make us walk out of the tomb. He calls us to come and then we have to put our own feet on the floor, and you have to get up and follow Jesus out of those dead places. Come out of the tomb and then when you find yourself back in the land of the living. Listen to what Jesus says to you - the same thing he said to Lazarus his once-dead-now-alive friend. "Now take off the grave clothes and be free. Be done with that dead life that has wound you so tight, confined in captivity and injustice. Let your arms swing free! Come and be done with the stench of death. Come step into the abundant life that the resurrected Jesus Christ has prepared for you." Hear this promise - this is not theoretical. Through Jesus, the resurrected Christ, all that has been brutalized in your real life - all that has been lifeless in your real life - all that seems beyond repair in your real life - can be raised back to life. So that when people come to the tomb that you've been laying in for two years, four years, your whole life, when people come there they will say the same thing they said when they found Jesus' tomb empty. Now why did they put her? This is the only place she or he has ever lived. They went to a new place. Because resurrected people simply no longer live in the tombs they were dead in, and they no longer look the way they used to look when the death is dying in them. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was not and is not theoretical. A dead man walked in to back into life and our resurrection is meant to be more than theoretical. It's meant to be manifested for real. Because Jesus was really raised and because the Word declares that Jesus is the first fruit, not the last fruit, or the only fruit. We are promised that the things that have died in our life will really get their feet under them again. And this is why we don't fear any kind of death. Not when it comes to us unexpectedly and not when we're invited to lay down our lives.

But before you walk out of here today I also want you to know three additional realities of the resurrected life, and they're short but they're important. One: Holy Saturday is a real thing. Holy Saturday is the day between death and resurrection. Holy Saturday is the wait inside or outside of the tomb. Part of this Holy Saturday is the thread-clinging, hope-hanging-onto, some-sort-of time, and Holy Saturday will always feel some sort of way. I believe in the resurrection of the body. I actually have no doubts about it all - by faith I know it's coming to pass. I also know that Holy Saturday is still a thing and you cannot skip from death to Resurrection without a bit of a wait. And I don't want to diminish how holy Saturday feels in this life, because some of you are in it. So for those of you who believe in the resurrection but are

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

living this long moment in between: hear this promise. It is trustworthy, we can cling to this hope that it's true, and it says there will be a day. There will be a day when God will wipe every tear from our eyes, a day where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. The old order of things will pass away. There will be a day when God will make everything new and I believe this unbelievable news because of the unbelievable resurrection that has already come to pass. The resurrection is real, Holy Saturday is a thing.

Secondly: According to the Bible when Jesus is raised back to life he still has scars on his hands from the nails that were driven through them, and a hole in his side from where the sword pierced him. Being raised back to life does not erase your past experiences, it just redeems them. One of the beauties of the resurrection is that when it takes over your life your scars can then bear witness to the miracle of your resurrection. And at North Park University every single semester I have the opportunity to speak in the nursing class. It's the O.B. section of the nursing course, and I speak to them about perinatal death and miscarriage and stillbirth and what it feels like to be a patient and how they can serve and care well for the parents who are grieving the loss of a child. At the end of the teaching and there's always a time of question and answer. In a North Park University we are an open enrollment school - you do not have to ascribe to a particular faith to come there. And so in our classrooms we have students of no faith, some faith, all different kinds of faith and they all get to ask questions. And a question that is posed almost every single time is: Why do you still believe in a God of miracles when God did not do a miracle for you? To which I always respond: You think this is not a miracle? Eleven times I've conceived, eleven times I've delivered a child stillborn or miscarried, and every morning I wake up expecting. Every day I can't wait to see what God is going to conceive and I have absolute faith he's going to bring this stuff to full term. You think that's not a miracle? And that miracle is all the more amazing when you can see the scars. It is in view of our scars that the resurrection becomes more powerful. Don't be afraid to let your scars show. Scars testify to the miracle that even after them you sat up, got your feet under you, and walked back out into real life. Oh how the world needs some scar-bearing, resurrected people to give them hope that even though they have scars they too might be raised again! The resurrection is real, Holy Saturday is still a thing, and scars can testify, and you cannot do this by yourself.

Jesus was raised back to life. The Bible declares that even Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, could not raise himself, and that he had to rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit to raise him from the dead. Jesus was raised back to life. In our texts this morning you find Mary. She's standing outside the tomb and she's crying and the two angels say "Woman why are you crying?" To which Mary says "They took my Lord, I don't know where they put him." Mary then turns and sees Jesus standing there but does not realize it's Jesus. Jesus then asks her a similar question: "Woman why are you crying? Who is it you're looking for?" Thinking Jesus was the

2018-04-01 *Rise Up!*

gardener Mary says, "Sir if you have carried him tell me where you put him and I will get him." Its that final phrase that really struck me. Mary, in the in the face of death, imagines that she can fix the situation. Now if you read the scripture closely it's hilarious a lot of the time. We just don't read it real deeply. Mary - I don't know if you heard me - desperate in the face of death, imagines that she can fix the situation. Tell me where you put him I'm going to go get him, and I'm going to put him back. It is an audacious assertion that she can just find out where Jesus' body is, she can pick up the dead weight of this fully grown man all by herself and bring him back to the tomb. Now I don't mean to be crass, but it is not reasonable! What is Mary going to do, throw Jesus over her shoulder and bring him back? It is not reasonable and it got me thinking how often we try to fix things by ourselves how often we throw the weight of solving things over our own shoulders and try to carry the dead weight of it all. Jesus was raised back to life. I want you to think also about the fact that Mary could have put some of the things back in order but Jesus would have still been dead. And a lot of the things that you're trying to put back well you might get in the right place, but they need to be raised back to life. In the midst of Mary's desperation, in the middle of Mary's plan to carry the dead weight by herself, Jesus calls her by name. In that moment, Mary turns toward Jesus - recognizing that Jesus has been right in the middle of it all the whole time. And I like to think that in this moment Mary recognized two things. First and foremost that God is more powerful than she previously thought - and not in theory but in actuality. And secondly - I like to think that at that moment when Jesus calls Mary by name - that the moment she recognized him - that the weight of resurrection was not hers to carry and she realized it. That there was a savior named Jesus who was going to be with her in the midst.

And this is my hope for you this Easter morning: That you too would hear Jesus call you by name. That you would become acutely aware that there is a savior right now, standing close by not just in theory but in actuality. A God who is not unaware of the brutalities or the pains that are in your life. A friend who knows what it is to be mocked and flogged and battered. A savior who was also raised back to life as a first fruit, and a companion who is now calling you out of your own tomb so that you could walk together with Christ towards the resurrection and life. This is the good news that's at the center of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which is why at Easter services around the world today we proclaim the truth boldly, saying this is not click-bait. The resurrection is not theoretical, and so we proclaim together this truth that we began with: He is risen. Can we try that? He is risen.

[Audience responds "He is risen indeed!"]

2018-04-01 *Rise Up!*

I want to push you further into actuality. Several years ago I was leading a men's discipleship group - women can do that, men have been leading women's ones for years. A young disciple named Ryan **significant mention** to me that it is good that we say "He is risen. He is risen indeed!" But he said, instead, what if we said "Jesus is alive. He is alive indeed!". He said that people to remember that Jesus was not just resurrected back to life, raised in the past tense, but that Jesus *is* the resurrection and the life in the *present* tense. Jesus *is* alive. He is alive indeed. Try that. Jesus is alive.

[Audience responds "He is alive indeed!"]

Perhaps this would help us, as the people of God, to remember the resurrection, which means to put it back into our membership, to daily put new life onto our roster. To acknowledge the possibility that true change is present and accounted for this day. To remember that Jesus wasn't raised for a moment and then went away. He was not the only or last fruit, just the first fruit. And that because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ today God is calling people out of their tombs. And every day after this then the whole of the possibility that your dead life, any part of it that's wound tight and grave clothes, might just sit up, put its feet under it, stand up and walk back into real life. Jesus is alive!

Let me pray for us. Lord Jesus we are so grateful that you are not dead. That you are alive and that you are not a last fruit or an only fruit, but that you are a first fruit. God I pray for my brothers and sisters today who are living theoretical Christian lives, that God, that when people begin to pull back the curtain of our lives that they were like: Wait, why aren't you there any more? And people would say: Have you not heard? She is risen. He is risen. God I pray for those who are living holy Saturday moments, who feel like, man I've been waiting for this part to be raised for so long. God may the community gather in those holy Saturday moments and give them courage that there will be a day. God for those in this room who are filled with scars who have hid them or been ashamed of them. God I pray that the power of your resurrection would redeem them. And may our scars on resurrected people in this room bear witness to a world that so desperately needs that kind of witness. And God I pray that for the people in this room who have constantly tried to lift the weight of their life and carry it over their shoulders. That today you would come and say that's no way to go about this whole thing. That you would let them know that indeed, you will raise them from the dead. God, I pray your grace over us, your truth in us, but most of all your resurrection power in us. In Jesus' name amen.

[Voice of Pastor Scott]

And thank you Pastor Judy. Our response to hearing the Word being proclaimed at Artisan is always to come to the table of the Lord and to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. And I

2018-04-01 Rise Up!

want to invite you to do that now as we sing this next song. At Artisan we have an open table. This is the table, not of the church, but of the Lord, as we sometimes say. And so you don't need to be a member of our church to partake of communion with us. You simply need to be following Jesus today in this place. And we practice this by taking a piece of the bread, remembering Christ's body broken for you and for me, dipping it in one of the cups, remembering Christ's blood which is shed for the forgiveness of sins. And you can take that right here at the table. And may it be food for your weary spiritual souls, and may it be the body and blood of the Savior. And may it be an act of unity, not only with each other, but with all Christians throughout time and around our world today who are taking communion to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. If you prefer not to take communion, no one will look at you funny. We have a member of the prayer team at the back of the sanctuary who will be happy to pray with you regardless of your faith commitments or lack thereof. You can certainly sit and just observe this time, but our table will be open for the rest of the time that we're together. And we're going to sing this song, which I don't think is intended to be a Christian song originally, but we've turned it into one. So it's very powerful for us and I encourage you to raise your voice as our table is open. Come and receive. Thank you for being with us on Easter! Pastor Judy, would you come and give us a benediction please?

[Voice of Pastor Judy]

I invite you to stand for the benediction and for me to give the blessing, and I think lift up our heads, because Jesus wants to bless us, we don't hang our heads. This is like God wants to send you on your way. And I just want to say for real - for real, not in like some sort of theoretical way: whatever the dead places, and I don't mean we couldn't name them right? Addiction and anger and feeling like your marriage is struggling or you don't know how to get on with your kids or you should have broken up with that person a long time ago or you should date that person... I don't know. But we all know what those places are, and I want to tell you in actuality, not theoretically, God wants to transform them. And if you'll give them to him and come out of the tomb, he'll do that work. And so now as you go on your way: May the God who loved the whole world so much he simply couldn't stay away, so he put on skin to come and walk with us, and to die for us, and then to be raised back to life. May this good God whom we know as Jesus Christ go before you to guide the way so that your life might come back to life. May he go behind you to encourage you to get rid of your grave clothes but to testify to your scars. May he be above you to watch over you on all the holy Saturdays from now on forward. May he go beside you to be your most intimate travelling companion. May you hear him call you by name and may you know that he says this is not all up to you. And may he go within you to give you

2018-04-01 *Rise Up!*

the peace that passes all understanding. It means a peace that makes no sense at all. A peace that comes when we know that Jesus is really alive. Go in peace and Happy Easter.

[end of sermon]

[Male voice] For more information visit us at ArtisanChurch.com