PREACHING & TEACHING

Easter Sermon

An Easter Sunday sermon framework built on the strangest thing about the resurrection accounts: nobody in them is delighted at first. They are frightened, they do not recognise him, and the earliest gospel ends with women running away saying nothing.

20 min preached · 5 segments

Five movements, twenty minutes. Built for the fullest room of the year, including the people who are only there because it is Easter.

BEFORE YOU RECORD

- This is the fullest room you will preach to all year and a large part of it is there under mild family duress. Preach to them without ever signalling that you know they are visitors.
- The temptation is triumph at volume. The accounts do not support it. Fear, confusion and non-recognition are in every one of them, and preaching that is more honest and lands harder.
- Publish by early March if releasing as an episode. Easter search traffic builds a month out.

01. The hook: nobody is happy

3 min

[this surprises people who think they know the story]

Read the four resurrection accounts side by side and the striking thing is that nobody reacts the way we do on Easter morning. Mary thinks he is the gardener. The men on the Emmaus road walk seven miles with him and do not know who he is. Thomas refuses to accept it.

And Mark, the earliest, ends with the women running from the tomb and saying nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. That is the last line of the oldest account we have.

02. The text

4 min

[read one account properly rather than harmonising four]

[read John 20:1-18, or Mark 16:1-8 if you have the nerve for the ending]

In John, notice that Mary only recognises him when he says her name. Not by his face. Not by the wounds. By one word, said the way only one person said it.

03. The tension: for the half of the room that is not sure

4 min

[name the doubt generously - this is the whole pastoral opportunity of Easter]

Some of you find this difficult to believe, and I want to say plainly that this is a reasonable position and that the first people to hear it found it difficult too. They were not credulous ancients. They knew what happens to dead people.

The accounts do not read like propaganda. Propaganda does not make women the first witnesses in a culture where their testimony carried no legal weight, and it does not

end with everyone frightened.

04. The turn

6 min

[the claim - said once, not defended]

[your material, 500 words - one illustration]

Whatever else it means, it means the story did not end where everyone watching on Friday was certain it had ended. Which is a claim about every ending, including the ones people in this room are currently sitting in.

05. The close

3 min

[back to the name - short]

Come back to Mary in the garden, and to the fact that recognition came when she was addressed by name. Not explained to. Named.

[your one closing sentence, then stop]

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