

Rev. & Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

4/11/10 **"I Have Seen the Lord!" John 20: 11-18**

Mary Magdalene was crying at Jesus' tomb. Her master was dead. On top of that, his body was nowhere to be found in the tomb. We can imagine the depth of her despair and confusion.

Then suddenly Jesus appeared before her. He gently called her name, "Mary." In utter bewilderment and awe, Mary responded, "Rabbouni!"

The aliveness and presence of Jesus was breathtaking. Mary could not understand what had happened. The Bible has no categories to explain it either. The event defies all of our human categories of explanation. We only hear Mary's cry, "I have seen the Lord!"

"I have seen the Lord!" What does this mean?

One. Jesus is not dead. He is alive. The crucifixion did not end in despair but in hope.

Two. God said, "Yes" to everything Jesus stood for. It was the will of God that Jesus healed the sick. It was the will of God that Jesus was gentle to the despised people of the land. It was the will of God that Jesus stood for the poor and oppressed. It was the will of God that Jesus shared bread with any one who came to him.

Then three. Jesus overcame death. Here death does not mean only physical death. It means every form of injustice and incongruity. It is wrong for people to be hungry. It is wrong for the rich to oppress the poor. It is wrong for women and children to be treated cruelly. Injustice is wrong. It is against the will of God.

Then four. Jesus is lord, and the powers of this world are not. If Jesus is lord, Caesar is not. If Jesus is lord, Nero is not. This is why early Christians could face hungry lions before thousands of Nero's cheering crowd.

So Mary's worlds, "I have seen the Lord!" witness the transformative power of God in the world. Easter

happens again and again.

In the Christmas Eve of 1945, a few American GIs and a few Japanese young men were singing "Silent Night, Holy Night" at the home of an American missionary in Tokyo. Four months prior to that, they had been enemies. But in that Christmas Eve, they were friends in Christ. Easter happens again and again. Sometimes, Christmas and Easter come at the same time.

A traveler is exhausted, and the night is dark. He feels as if he could not go on. He collapses. When he looks up, he sees a glimmer of light in the distance.

At that, the exhaustion is lifted. The traveler is empowered. He stands up and begins to walk.

The traveler is you and I. The light is Mary's exciting cry, "I have seen the Lord!"

Thanks be to God.