

## From the Pastor

I know that Easter is come and gone, but I've still been thinking about what happened the Sunday morning after Jesus' death. All four gospels say that the tomb where Jesus' body had been placed was discovered to be empty. There was no body in that tomb. Couldn't find it. All four of the gospels say that the reason for this, the reason Jesus' body was not in the tomb is that Jesus had risen, had been raised from the dead.

Jesus, his body included, had been raised from death. It wasn't that Jesus' spirit or his soul had somehow survived his death to return to God or to go to heaven. The resurrection was of Jesus and his body.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus, risen from the dead, appears to all but one his disciples on the evening of the first Easter. Thomas wasn't there. And when the others tell Thomas the good news, he doesn't believe them, saying, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side. I will not believe." The following week, Jesus, risen from the dead, appears again to his disciples. He shows Thomas the wounds of crucifixion, the wounds he still bears in his resurrected body.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus, risen from the dead, surprises his disciples on the evening of the first Easter by appearing to them. They are scared out of their wits because they think they are seeing a ghost. But Jesus says to them, "Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bone as you see that I have." The resurrected Jesus is the flesh-and-bone Jesus. And the wounds of his crucifixion are still in his hands and feet.

What does this mean? It means that our flesh-and-bone existence in this flesh-and-bone world matters; it is important still. What happens to us and happens to those with whom we live in this world still matters; it is all important. Whatever pain or misfortune we suffer in our bodies and in our world matters. It very much matters to God. And whatever pain or misfortune those who live in this world with us, it matters too. It very much matters to God. And it should also matter very much to us. What we say and what we do in this flesh-and-bone existence in this flesh-and-bone world matters very much. It matters to these other people and it matters to God, for Jesus' tomb was found to be empty on that first Easter Sunday morning. His body wasn't there.

Pastor Neal