

From the Pews, Scott Clark

365 times.

The internet reports that the phrase ‘do not be afraid,’ or a similar such sentiment, appears in the Bible 365 times – conveniently, once for each day in the year. This is most certainly not true but was likely derived by someone selling calendars. However, it is said enough times and by some pretty important figures that the reference still warrants consideration.

We get two such references in our Easter scripture reading. First, an angel appears and offers this instruction to Mary Magdalene and (the unfortunately named) other Mary. In the second utterance, it is Jesus himself including the phrase among his instructions to the women.

Perhaps the reason this phrase appears so often in the Bible is that there were things happening that would rightly frighten a person – things that people had never seen before. There are surely many, many things to be afraid of in life. I would not attempt even a partial list, but things do come to mind. Often, a problem or situation we fear is not actually that fearful, but a lack of certainty about the future in which the problem or the situation will occur is.

We saunter about the world daily, ignoring the many uncertainties that we encounter. When we step out the door, we take an enormous leap of faith that things will go as we plan and that we will get to our destination and return safely. We trust that other motorists are as diligent as we are. That our bones, ligaments and tendons will be there when we call on them to steady or propel us. We assume that bridges, buildings and elevators will act as they have been designed.

Do you want to challenge yourself? Have you run out of board games to play and Netflix to watch? Try this. As you go about your day, actively make note of everything that requires your trust in the uncertain, that is, everything that you do not have control over. You will learn very quickly how much uncertainty you are effortlessly tolerating.

I recently read an article where John Kavanaugh, noted ethicist and philosopher, tells of a time in his life when he went to Calcutta to work at a temple that had been converted to a home for people suffering on the streets of India. This experience was part of his search for direction about his future. Soon, Kavanaugh met Mother Teresa. She asked, “And what can I do for you?” Kavanaugh asked her to pray for him. “What do you want me to pray for?” she asked. He responded by explaining that he had travelled thousands of miles from America searching for a direction in his life. That he wasn’t sure if he should return and become a university professor or if he should stay abroad and work with the poor: “Pray that I have clarity.”

Mother Teresa said, “No, I will not do that.” When Kavanaugh asked why, she said, “Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of.” Kavanaugh commented that her work and purpose must surely reflect that she has the clarity he longed for.

She laughed and said, “I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So, I will pray that you trust God.”

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, April 12, 2020 | online, 11:15a | Easter Sunday | He is Risen!



Prayer of **Preparation**

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. From the waters of death you raise us with him, and renew your gift of life within us. Increase in our hearts and minds the risen life we share with Christ, and help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gathering and Preparing for **God’s Word**

Prelude, “An Easter Celebration”

Raney

Welcome & Announcements

Sentences of Scripture

Call to Worship

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Let us worship God!

Hymn #232, *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*

EASTER HYMN

**Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!**

**Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!**

**Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
praise eternal as God’s love. Alleluia!
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!**

Morning Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.

Hearing **God’s Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Isaiah 25:6-9*

Time for Children

New Testament Lesson, *Matthew 28:1-10*

Homily, “No Road Map for This”

Responding to **God’s Word**

Affirmation of Faith, *The Apostles’ Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Music, “Be Not Afraid”

Berthier

Charge and Benediction

Postlude, “Hallelujah” from *Messiah*

Handel