

The Exciting Good News

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Peace be with you!

When was the last time you were excited to tell people about big news—[whoever “it” was]? Maybe you just got engaged. Maybe you just found out you were going to be a father. Maybe your daughter took her first step or said her first word. Maybe your best friend woke up from a coma. No matter what the news is, you are excited to tell everyone you meet about it, because you cannot hold it in. In January 2013, I remember being so excited when I found out my childhood best friend, Nathan, was still alive and painting amazing pictures. For most people my age, reconnecting with a childhood friend is exciting, not miraculous, but for me having Nathan back in my life was a miracle. See, Nathan had Leigh’s dystonia, causing his whole body to be paralyzed and preventing him from speaking more than a few words. All Nathan could do was turn his head, move his left arm, talk with his eyes, and speak a few words. A cold could have sent Nathan to the intensive care unit. It was truly a miracle for Nathan to be alive and painting amazing pieces. I will always cherish the two years I spent with Nathan before he went to heaven. Anyone who meets me eventually hears about Nathan and the story of us.

 *When were you excited?*

 *Read: Acts 2:14a, 22-32*

In the same excited fashion, the disciples cannot hold in the good news: Jesus Christ who had been crucified and died has risen. The words of Psalm 16:8-11 are echoed in Acts 2:25-28:

✝ *“I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.”*

The things of this world do not corrupt Jesus—he is sinless. God the Father does not abandon Jesus in Hades after he suffers and dies on the cross, but he raises him up to new life. God the Father never truly abandons Jesus physically or psychosocially. The news of Jesus’ resurrection is nothing like anything the world has witnessed. It is a miracle.

Not only that, God the Father uses the corruption of the world to carry out his glorious plan. The crowd (you and I) decides Jesus’s fate on the cross. We yell out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” every time we sin and go against God’s wishes by doing the devil’s work. We repeatedly say those words, because we live in a broken world. Yet God the Father repeatedly raises Jesus (and us) up to new life, because God’s power cannot be held down (Acts 2:22-24).

📅 *When have felt like you had let God down?*

The power of God’s plan causes the apostles to have faith in the Triune God. God the Father conquers death through Jesus’ crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension. The apostles believe and know God’s love has the power to protect them, provide for their every need, and lead them to where he needs them to be. This news is exciting for the apostles, because there is

something more than the darkness in the world. Jesus Christ is the apostle's light in the world. The apostles hang onto the promise of the good news of Jesus's resurrection and ascension.

📌 *How do you hang onto the promise of the resurrection?*

A colleague and dear friend, Rebecca Florence Miller, wrote a [blog post](#) as to why a decline in the “Christian Nation” may be good thing for the faith. Rebecca states,

When we are culturally dominant [a Christian Nation], it can be oh so easy to hide the junk in our lives. It can be easy to stay in our little Christian huddle, our church club. It can be easy to think that our Bible pounding is actual devotion to God rather than a prideful attempt to stay at the top of the heap. It can be easy to skate by and pretend we have an active, growing faith when we are actually just going through the motions and trying to impress others.

Rebecca continues by saying when Constantine declared Roman Empire a Christian Nation, true discipleship began to decline. Christendom led to many abuses within the Church, especially during the Inquisition and the Crusades. And some individuals continue to use the church for their personal gain today.

📌 *Have you been hurt by a “Christian” group?*

However, as Christendom declines, true discipleship is on the rise. If you are a disciple, you understand and believe Jesus emptied himself on the cross for your sins. As a disciple, your life is about serving Jesus Christ, not yourself. Discipleship is a selfless occupation for the sole purpose of serving God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Not only that, as a disciple, you are beyond thrilled to share the good news with others who do not

know God yet, because he protects, provides, calls and leads, and gives you eternal life. Nothing else matters.

As I listen to the excitement behind Peter's words, I find myself getting excited to share the good news of Jesus's resurrection—the excitement behind God's love and grace. I am truly excited about becoming a deacon in the Episcopal Church. I love writing and leading Bible studies and developing relationships with the individuals in the group. But more importantly, I am excited to work on developing a disability ministry as well as protocols on how individuals with disabilities can serve during worship. God is calling me to develop an inclusive community within the church by including individuals with disabilities. This includes demonstrating how an individual with cerebral palsy can serve during worship while still needing assistance with daily activities—something I struggle to figure out myself. Yet I know I can serve others by listening in order to create a safe environment for individuals with all abilities. With God's guidance, I feel my own excitement for the good news continuing to grow.

Thanks be to God!

📄 *How is God calling you? Are you excited about your call?*

Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for Peter's excitement for the good news and his example of discipleship. Help us to be true disciples of our risen Savior. Remind us Jesus's resurrection about your love, grace, and promise of eternal life—it is not about us. Swell our hearts with your love, so we can feel excited again. Thank you for calling us back to you. Amen.