

## Don't Be Afraid...Go and Tell

*The angel [at Jesus' empty tomb] said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him. See, I have told you." So they ... ran to tell His disciples. And behold, Jesus met them ... Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me." (Matthew 28:5-8b, 9a, 10)*

Family, on that first Easter morning, both Jesus and the angel give two commands to the women. They say, "Don't be afraid." And then they say, "Go and tell." And yet, why are people still afraid? In fact, why should we not be afraid? Then, again, go and tell who?

This reminds me of an illustration entitled, "The Bee Sting." One day, a vacationing family was driving along in their car, windows rolled down, enjoying the warm breeze of a sunny day. All of a sudden, a yellow jacket darted into the vehicle. A little girl, highly allergic to bee stings, cringed in the backseat. If she is stung, she could die within an hour.

"Oh, Daddy," she squealed in terror. "It's a bee! It's a bee! It's going to sting me!" The father pulled the car over to a stop, and reached back to try to catch it. Buzzing around toward him, the wasp bumped up against the front windshield where the father trapped it with his fist.

Holding it in his closed hand, the father waited for the inevitable sting. And sure enough, the wasp let him have it. As the little girl still saw the "bee" in the car, she started to panic again "Daddy, it's going to sting me." However, the father gently responded, "No honey, he's not going to sting you now. Look at my hand."

Throughout this Lenten season, we have been learning what the hand of the Lord did and continues to do for us. However, on Easter, when Jesus says "look at my hands," it brings a totally different meaning and reason why we don't need to fear. In fact, He has Satan's sting, the sting of death, the sting of sin, the sting of deceit, and the sting of feeling worthless. Jesus has all of those stingers in His hands.

That's why when we "see" those nail-scarred hands through His Word and Sacraments, we are enabled to realize that, on our behalf, Jesus willingly took all the pain Satan could throw at Him. He actually reduced Satan to a bee that's lost its stinger—all Satan can now do is buzz, and in reality, he's defeated, forever!

And so, the question comes back: "Don't be afraid"—why not? Because Jesus has risen from the dead!!! And because He has risen from the dead, you, too, will rise eternally!

Because Jesus has risen from the dead, nothing can take you out of His hands—nothing! And because Jesus has risen from the dead, you will forever be with Him. That's the victory that Jesus won for you and me!

And let's not forget to "Go and tell"—but tell who? First of all, let's continue to tell each other. Let's tell every single member of this beloved congregation, every St. Stephen baptized and communicant member who learn from Jesus and follow Him with their whole hearts. Then, let's tell other brothers and sisters about this crucified and risen One—that Jesus is the only One who saves and that everyone who believes in Him is a child of God; dearly loved by Him. So, join us! And eventually—tell the world; for Jesus is calling all of us, everyone who will listen.

Therefore, the reality of Easter has truly taken away our fear, for He will always have those glorious marks to prove His love for us. Oh, and yes, do you have a moment? Let me tell you about Jesus.....

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Seehafer