

We need a good story.

I don't think I have very good stories. At least, I don't think they are very good. Usually the good ones, I forget. I sat at my desk this week – wishing, hoping, praying – for an unbelievable story.

Sure, I can google the internet – but that isn't my story. I could make things up, but that doesn't seem genuine. I use world news and current events, but so often those stories are sad. I want something astounding, amazing.

I have the same problem with God – I want the unbelievable, I want the miracle, I want the really extra-ordinarily good story – but day in, day out – I don't get much. I don't see much. I don't really have any stories to jot down and use for a sermon.

I just have my boring little life. Nothing too exciting. God is present, big deal...I know we're connected by faith to God's work in the world. I believe that God works through us. But – I want a bigger and better, life altering story.

The disciples walked with their living story...life with Jesus was anything but dull. Healings, Hiking up Mountains, Random Acts of Kindness, Forgiveness, Meals with shady characters, Debates with Religious and Political Leaders, Boat Rides, Parties, joyful Kids... and listening to all those parable stories, teachings and of course sermons.

Thrilling! Right? Okay, well most of it.

So, when Jesus is crucified...executed publically by the Empire...cruelly condemned by leaders of his church, I can understand why the disciples act as if their world has ended. It had. Or least their pain and despair has clouded their minds, so they believe their world had ended.

They were so blinded, that they couldn't see the unbelievable story in front of their eyes, they literally did not believe what they were hearing.

These proud men dismissed the women...calling their resurrection experience - just an idle tale. Jesus foreshadowed his death and resurrection – 3 times – was that just a lie? Was Jesus just crazy?

These disciples want nothing more than for Jesus to be back with them – still they ignore the women from the tomb who proclaim that the resurrection has happened!

The unbelievable story, isn't believed.

The greatest news in the world, is lost Jesus' closest friends - except Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary (James mother), and eventually Peter.

As much as we want a storied life of exhilaration – believing the unbelievable is unlikely. Especially in a world ravaged by loss and injustice, corruption and deceit, to believe in the power of the resurrection, is foolish. To live this unbelievable story, to live the resurrection, is impossible.

But if we want a good story, is there anything better than Easter?

It is a story after all, the narrative of the life and death of this historical figure named Jesus. However, is the end of Jesus' story... an idle tale, or does this narrative continue?

Does God's story continue through resurrection, into the church, into you and me? I believe it does. Because I see it.

Believing in the resurrection is not a matter of mental effort. Belief does not dwell in the space between our ears. Belief becomes life in our very bones. Belief transforms our everyday. Belief in the resurrection is not just a response on a religion survey; belief in the resurrection changes our very existence, right here and right now.

We have already been resurrected like Jesus in baptism, so we are already participants in new life.

We don't look for living among the dead. The cross is a tragedy, but it is prologue to the good news resurrected life. We don't end our funeral services in the cemetery. We end with food, fellowship, hope, promise, remembering – life in the resurrection.

We are the living, not the dead. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, because he lives. We are the hands and feet and voices of God. Our communities are full of God's life already!

We live resurrection, we practice resurrection, we engage in holy work, we repeat Easter over and over, every day. Planting gardens, caring for Alzheimer patients, raising kids, celebrating the seasons, awed by the rising and setting sun,

hiking the mountains with God beside us, grinding through the patterns of the world, the cycles of birth, death, birth, death, - and to life again. We don't stay in the dark death...we have been given the light and life, and we abide here.

There is a lot in this world that is ugly, but that is when God creates beauty. God takes the muck of the world, the sin and evil – and transforms it into something wonderful.

God's story is all around us. Sometimes we just miss it.

We look so hard for something “out of this world incredible!” ...we miss God in the simplicity. In everyday lives of you, and me. Simply loving families, friends, neighbors, strangers, enemies -----loving people back to life.

Faith is not just a matter of knowledge, but of the courage to believe in life at the mouth of an empty tomb, to trust the words Jesus spoke, whether they confuse, comfort, or scare us, to believe the unbelievable.

We need a good story, and it is right in front of us.

God's story in Jesus', and Jesus' story in you.