

Rooted in Easter Joy and God's Promise of Life

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Every spring when sunlight increasingly gallops into each day, I get a little giddy. I know intellectually that the earth's predictable rotation will lead to more light in our northern sky at this time of year but emotionally, the gain of light thrills me. That is- until next fall when I'll choose to ignore that gain of dark hours.

In the southern hemisphere, the days are shortening. Leaves are reddening and falling. The months of March through May are autumn days of harvest before winter. Melbourne, Australia will have three hours of sunshine in June. Skiers are hoping for good snow this July and August just like Alaskans do in November.

To celebrate Holy Week in the southern hemisphere, one relies on other signs of life emerging from the grave than what we have up north. Green shoots are not springing through the snow in their yards. Maybe this keeps Australians more grounded in the every-Sunday-ness of resurrection. I hope it might be true.

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the story of this week. This is Jesus' story. His story, by God's desire, writes the rest of creation in-between the lines. Sin, forgiveness, mercy, justice, sorrow, hope are gathered here. What Jesus taught and who he healed are wrapped up in this story. Lavish grace buoys our lives being held up and on-to in Jesus' story.

Perhaps in a hemisphere where creation is sprouting green, we forget how very long reconciliation can take. Perhaps we seasonally assume that the northern exponential gain of light is somehow like the dawn of the beloved community where all are fed, none are fearful, all know their deep value in God.

We'd do well to remember the season of autumn in our Easter celebration. The vegetation of the earth necessarily returns to the soil where it decomposes. Seeds are wind-dispersed for the sake of the promised new life. A grain of wheat must die, Jesus said, for it to bear much fruit.

Jesus' resurrection wasn't a return to what was but change into the fullness of what God is doing. Resurrection is not meant for measured understanding (as if intellect alone could contain it.) Easter living gets tried on in the mix of love, politics, neighborhoods, recovery, grief, joy and economics. It gets tried out as it shapes us into the resurrection work that God is doing. We sometimes fail as Easter people; the resurrection still is at work.

The resurrection of Jesus means that death does not have the last word. God has the final say through the Word made flesh of Christ Jesus. Even when we forget, even when we confuse it with ease or prosperity, the resurrection is at work.

May this root you in Easter joy and God's promise of life.