

It was not the place to be hanging around – at the tomb of an enemy of the state who was executed for undermining the rule of the empire and the status of the religious establishment. It just wasn’t safe to be targeted by authorities not very inclined to be forgiving of known associates, companions, and even friends of such criminals. Who knows why Mary was there that morning. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had already anointed the body and prepared it for burial. There was nothing left for her to do. And yet, the first chance she got, in the dark before the dawn at the end of the Sabbath, Mary made her way to the tomb and found the stone removed. When she saw this she made the only conclusion that made any sense, that logic would allow, that the body had been removed to another location, she knew not where.

She ran to tell Peter and the beloved disciple, who came running headlong into the empty tomb, took it all in, turned around and went home still uncomprehending. Mary stayed and wept, beyond grief, beyond expectation, maybe even beyond hope. Mary wept and wept until her heart broke open so wide she began to see the scene before her with new eyes, first the angels, then the gardener, and then – then she heard him call her name, “Mary,” and she knew the man standing before her was Jesus, her teacher, her friend. But this wasn’t the Jesus of just a few days ago. This wasn’t Jesus, resuscitated like her brother Lazarus, only to die again, same person only a little changed because you can’t die, come back to life and go on being the same person you always were. No this was Jesus, and with his resurrection God did something utterly new, utterly different, utterly unexpected, utterly inexplicable. This was Jesus who was crucified and is now risen, was glorified and soon to be ascended. This was Jesus who gave up his Spirit on the cross so that it might pour out into the world shifting the very fiber of creation such that it’s power would reverberate throughout eternity. This was Jesus who said to Mary, “Don’t hold on to me, keep letting go in these moments of all you think you know, because God has done – is doing – a new thing, it is happening in you, to you, through you, among you right now, and it’s time for you to go and tell the world. God is doing a new thing.”

A few weeks ago, I shared about a blueberry bush clipping that I had taken from my old house on Oregon Hill to replant in my garden in Woodland Heights – a clipping that had died and was brown and brittle – a clipping that I had inexplicably planted in the ground

anyway and was continuing to inspect for any signs of new growth – and trace of new life. This plant, as I said a few weeks ago, is good and truly dead, and yet there remained something in me that was willing to consider that it just might take root and come back to life, as crazy as that might be. Well the other day, as I walked by it – yes that dead clipping is still planted in my garden – I noticed out of the corner of my eye, a touch of green protruding from one of the stems. I threw my glasses on and bent down to have a closer look. Could it be? I mean I know it’s ridiculous, but could it be?

No. A tiny shoot of a vine, perfectly camouflaged against the mulch and leaf litter, had opportunistically climbed and entwined itself around the dead blueberry branch protruding from the ground and had pushed out its first new green leaf. That blueberry bush was still good and dead, and in that moment I realized that my imagination, even as far-fetched as it was thinking that a dead branch might just take root and come back to life, my imagination was too small, especially when it comes to the new thing, the new life, the new creation that Jesus’ resurrection ushered into the world on this day all those thousands of years ago.

Because here’s the thing about resurrection. It isn’t about getting our old life back, our old church, our old job, our old love, our old health, our old neighborhood or community or old sense of stability, security or identity – it’s not about going back to the way things were. Resurrection is about something new – a new creation – not entirely discontinuous with what was, because nothing is lost with God. Because God gathers up all things for God’s redemptive, life-giving, regenerative purposes. But resurrection is about God making a way where there is no way. It is about God doing the unexpected, inexplicable, and previously unimagined.

It occurs to me that the world desperately needs a resurrection moment like the one Mary and eventually all the disciples had those many years ago. Old systems and our currently entangled ways of being, thinking, feeling, sensing are not suited to this troubled time that we find ourselves in. We don’t need to come up with a fresh take, a new model, a next anything. We need a resurrection moment.

The world desperately needs a bunch of people, like Mary, with hearts broken open so wide we stop believing what’s possible and start believing in what lies beyond the

imagination. The world desperately needs a bunch of people, like Mary, to let go of all we think we know so that we might succumb to the eternal reverberation of the Spirit that Jesus poured into the world O those many years ago. The world desperately needs a bunch of people to experience the new thing God is doing in us, to us, through us, among us.

Easter isn’t just the day we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection moment those thousands of years ago. Easter isn’t just the day we give thanks for Mary’s resurrection moment those thousands of years ago. Easter is also the day we say “yes” to our resurrection moment. Easter is the day we say “yes” to the eternal reverberation of the Spirit in us, through us, among us. It is the day we say “yes” to the unexpected, inexplicable, and previously unimagined. It’s the day we make way for something new for the sake of the world.