

Ordinary Time 10C 2016

In every life, there is a defining moment when we finally understand ourselves and our purpose in life. For St. Paul that moment came when God called him and revealed his Son to him, as we heard in today's second reading. Prior to his call Paul persecuted the church. He could not accept that the crucified Jesus was God's promised Messiah. But when God called him and revealed his Son to him, Paul's life was turned upside down. He realized that the crucified Jesus was God's Son, and he now understood he had been fighting against God. He understood that God had raised Jesus from the dead. And because God had raised Jesus from the dead, nothing would ever be the same. The world was different now. Paul was different now. And now there was only one thing to do: to preach the resurrection—the good news that Jesus is risen and alive.

The resurrection is what our faith is all about. If God did not raise Jesus from the dead, Jesus's death on the cross was in vain. If God did not raise him from the dead, Jesus was a holy man, but he was not the Son of God. If God did not raise him from the dead, we are the most pitiable of people, for we believe in eternal life; but there is no eternal life if God did not raise Jesus from the dead.

In today first reading, we heard how Elijah raised a child from the dead. And in the gospel, we heard a similar story about Jesus. Filled with compassion and love for a widow who had lost her son, Jesus raises her son from the dead, and

crowd exclaims “God has visited his people!” But as wondrous as these miracles were, the sons of these women died again. Elijah and Jesus brought them back to life, but they died again. Elijah and Jesus restored them to their former way of life, and they died again.

But when God raised Jesus from the dead, something new, something unheard of, happened. God did not restore Jesus to his former life; God raised him into his own life. God did not restore Jesus to his old life; God brought Jesus into resurrection life, a life we will not understand until we have experienced it. But something else happened. In raising Jesus from the dead, God made it possible for us to enter into this resurrection life with Jesus.

This is what Paul understood when God revealed his Son to him, and it was this faith in the resurrection that changed his life forever. For, if God raised Jesus into new life, then the world has been changed, and the world must hear the good news of the gospel. Paul could not, would not, keep this good news to himself.

It is our faith and hope in the resurrection that makes us followers of Jesus. It is our faith and hope in the resurrection that gives us hope. It is our faith and hope in the resurrection that calls us, just as Paul was called, to preach the gospel. For, if Christ is risen and alive, then our destiny is resurrection life. If the world has been so changed by the power of Christ’s resurrection, then we know the purpose and goal of our life: to live in a new way and preach the gospel to world.