

**KILMACOLM PARISH CHURCH**

**April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025    Easter Day**

**Theme: “but an idle tale”**

**Luke 24:1-12**

Let us pray,

Risen Christ, we rejoice that you are alive.

We come together with joyful prayer and singing.

We pray that all what we hear and all what is being said is your word to us on this  
Easter day.

Amen

This morning, me and you all have something in common.

This is my first Easter sermon here in Kilmacolm,  
and it is “our” first Easter service as Kilmacolm Parish Church.

So, I thought no pressure....

During Lent we followed Jesus towards Jerusalem.

Just two days ago, on Good Friday, we arrived at the cross.

And in our journey we followed Jesus according to Luke’s gospel.

Well, some of you may have noticed that this morning at Knapps we deviated on our  
journey.

We listen to Matthew’s account of Jesus’s resurrection, because I wanted to spare us  
“Luke” for now.

When I prepared for this Easter day,

contemplating which gospel I choose for the early morning service, I had the “luxury” to  
read Jesus’s resurrection story in all four gospels.

And when I compare them, one little side-sentence in Luke's account got my attention: The reaction of the disciples on the testimony of the women who had been at the empty tomb.

It was quite blond:

"But these words seemed to them [the disciples] an idle tale, and they did not believe them." [Lk 24:11]

This little sentence can only be found in Luke's account – so I thought it is worthwhile to have a closer look at it.

Our little sentence begins with the word "but".

The simple word "but" introduces a tension into a sentence, a contrast:

For example, "I used to read books easily, but now I need glasses".

Or, in this case, women told the disciples the good news - but the disciples didn't believe them.

The disciples had a big "but".

And my apologies here in case we have American friends with us this morning for whom this word has a double connotation.

The women told their story but for the disciples this was just an idle tale.

And the original Greek for the phrase "idle tale" is very strong.

It has the sense that the women seemed delirious, deranged, detached from reality.

The disciples may have thought these women were so disappointed, so consumed by their grief that they became victim of an illusion.

And anyhow in those times the word of a woman counted for little.

A woman's testimony was not accepted in a court of law.

All man – yes men(!) - knew women could not be trusted.

And therefore, by the way, if someone were making up the story of the resurrection during those times – if the story would be invented – for the very reason that women are no reliable witnesses you would never credit them with being witnesses.

You were asking for your story to be disbelieved.

The fact that women were the first witnesses is therefore a mark of the authenticity of the account.

But back to the disciples and the women.

The disciples did not believe the women's testimony.

But Peter.

And here is a second "but":

"But Peter got up and ran to the tomb..." [Lk 24:12]

Here again is the tension introduced by the 'but' word:

The other disciples dismissed the women but Peter wanted to check it out, to be sure.

Maybe the women should be trusted!

And so, he ran to the tomb - and then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Then there is a third "but".

Not only the disciples said more than 2000 years ago to the women:

"But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."

In one way or another this sentence is repeated today by most people when they hear about the Jesus's resurrection:

A nice story, but an idle tale.

And this "but", this disbelief in Jesus's resurrection, took off in the 17th and 18th centuries in the period we call the Enlightenment.

And today, this is the most common conviction – or even a better word "a belief":

There is no God,

or if there is one, this God is a detached and distant one who has no interest in the world or in people's lives.

In an enlightened world, the real "God", the "God" who is active in the world is Reason. Consequently, if there is a conviction if we can only eliminate all that religious delusion then the world will come to its senses and humanity will step out of the dark night of superstition.

And then the tale of humanity will be a tale of progress that will lead us to the sunny uplands of peace and prosperity for all.

“BUT” – and this is now my “but”.

When we look at our world today, I wonder how enlightened, how reasonable humanity really is:

“Alternative Facts”

People “believe” more in conspiracy theories than in science.

“Deals” – which one time were considered arrangements which are fair – became synonym for blackmailing.

Human rights, standards for relationships between nations, laws of war, basic understanding of decency, all what we had taken as granted, as reasonable, changed fundamentally.

The vision of the Enlightenment of a rational, fair, just prosper future for all, based on human rationality...

Well, I think we have proven that this our “idle tale”, today.

The “new” gods are now:

Economics, money, supremacy, power, egocentrism.

Those “gods” who promise to “make great again”.

And into this reality, our reality today, Jesus’s resurrection is God’s big “but”.

Through Jesus’s resurrection God challenges humanity as if he says:

Look at your tales of Enlightenment and rationality,

look at your tales of power and “alternative facts”,

these are idle tales, because they do not bring you a “better world”.

They do not bring you peace.

“But” I am the One, Your God, who has good thoughts for you.

I am the One who created you and intended you to be my beloved children – brothers and sisters.

I am the One who despite you rejected my son,  
who showed you my love: I am not finished with you.

Through Jesus life and resurrection I give a new tale.

The tale that I am the living God who is involved into the world and into your lives – and nothing can stop me.

All you have to do, is be like Peter.

It is OK if you doubt, but get up, run to the tomb, stop, look and then see that the tomb is empty.

This Easter Day is our opportunity to reject the idles tale which may occupy us.

This Easter Day is our opportunity to listen anew to the good news of Jesus's resurrection.

This Easter Day is God's call for each of us:

Come listen to me I am the One who has good thoughts for you – always.

Amen