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The Message: Let LOOSE on the World!

Mary stands in the garden, weeping as she peers into the empty tomb. The angels ask Mary, "Why are you crying?"

The angels aren't in the same gear as Mary. 'Why would she be weeping,' they wonder?

She knows. "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

She is defeated, bereft, and turns away from these not-mourning angels who obviously do not understand the tragedy unfolding in Mary's life.

Then she turns ... and there is Jesus, but her grief blinds her to the presence of Christ and she thinks it is the gardener.

That happens to us, doesn't it? In moments of despair, we don't see that God is with us; we don't notice that Jesus is carrying us.

But like the angels, the mind of Jesus is in another gear. He wonders, "Why are you weeping? For whom are you searching?" 'I'm right here! The weeping should be over!'

Mary repeats her question,
'Where have you laid him?
I will take him away.
I will weep over his broken body.
I will tend his wounds;
I will control the last bit of him there is to control.

But Jesus utters one word: "Mary!"

She turns. "Teacher!!"

Recognition
Rejoicing!
Resurrection!

"Mary!" Nothing else ... just a name. That's all he had to say for her to recognize his resurrected self.

It was enough to cause Mary to change gears: from mourning to amazement. Mystery to miracle. One word restored her shattered world.

The telling of this little encounter that John picks out of the stories surrounding the resurrection really emphasizes the power of the resurrection to free Mary from grief and fear, to free her to run and tell.

When Jesus brings Lazarus back to life, Lazarus stumbles out of the tomb still wrapped in the grave cloths. Jesus tells his followers,

"Unbind him, and let him go!" 'Let him loose!'

In all the tellings of the Easter story, no one expects the resurrection. No one initially believes. Not any of the disciples, not the women. We are not alone in finding it difficult to believe this happened. They have to experience it themselves.

You yourself will only truly acknowledge when you recognize it in your own life.

Easter is an invitation to recognize those moments in your own life when new life becomes real, when you are unbound, let loose to live your truth, be who God meant you to be, do what God meant you to do.

The question Christians embrace on Easter Sunday and every day of our lives is, 'what would be possible if the resurrection of Jesus Christ were true?'

What would be possible if we were to change gears and let the power of the Spirit in us loose upon the world?

For me the resurrected Jesus is perhaps most evident in the face of death. I experience over and over again that love and life are stronger than fear and death. Through the lives of the faithful, I am reassured that we can expect to see those we've loved and lost again. God has a future in store for each and all of us. Anything is possible with God.

Resurrection changes gears for all who experience it.

I find myself turning to metaphors and similes when speaking of the power of the resurrection.

Truck drivers in New Zealand and Australia have been known to put their vehicles into neutral on hills and release the brakes. To let loose the power of the truck and gravity to hurtle down a mountain: this is called driving in 'angel gear,' and it is an exhilarating but also dangerous gear to be in.

On Easter morning all Christians move into "angel gear," refusing to put the brakes of doubt on the faith and hope that Easter morning represents for each of us. It is joyful and exhilarating; it's also dangerous.

Living our lives in 'angel gear' means recognizing that Jesus is loose in our lives. And God's Spirit is in us, loosening the grave cloths that hold us back

Mary's gear-changing encounter with the risen Christ is a metaphor for our wonderful moments of recognition, in which suddenly, inexplicably, you know the presence of God -- when you know, ... you just know in your own heart that death and despair are not the final reality. God has broken into your despair and become the source of life and love once again.

Where do you see evidence of the resurrected Jesus?

The power of the resurrection is Jesus raised from the dead, proclaiming God's love as the ultimate force of the universe, stronger even than death.

You too can live your life in angel gear, looking for where the risen Jesus is let loose into your

personal world.

John Masefield captured the power and danger of the resurrected Christ in his drama, "The Trial of Jesus." Pilate's wife receives a report that Jesus rose from the tomb. She asks a centurion, "Do you think he is dead?"

"No, I don't,"

"Where then is he?"

"Loose on the world, lady, so that [nothing] can stop his truth!"

When Mary runs to tell you that Jesus is alive and the import for your life sinks in, I hope you can answer too,

"Loose on the world, lady... Loose on the world."