

The Anticipation of Holy Saturday and the Thrill of Easter Sunday

SCOTT HOEZEE

Many of us have ridden rollercoasters; and if so, then you know that as the train of cars leaves the entry station, it immediately begins to crawl up that first very large hill; and the farther up the cars go, the slower they go, until finally you can hear the clacking of the track chains...click...click...click...click...now, this creates huge anticipation; but as soon as that lead car dips down the other side of that first rise, the ride is off in seconds at high speed, and then it is non-stop thrills from there. Well, in the Bible, in the Christian year, a day called Holy Saturday is like that. It is a day of great anticipation as we wait for the thrill of Easter. Today on *Groundwork*, let's dig into scripture to think about Holy Saturday and Easter. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, this is now the third and final episode in a short, three-part series on Holy Week. So, we have already looked at Palm Sunday. We thought a little bit about what happens on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; but then we spent more time in the second episode on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. So, now we are at the end of Holy Week.

DARRELL DELANEY

We want to jump to Easter Sunday, where the celebration happens; where we are ready to party and praise the Lord; but a lot of us need to think a little bit more carefully about Holy Saturday because that is the time when we are looking forward to what happens in the aftermath of the death and burial of Jesus.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The Church is assigned a handful of passages for reflection on Holy Saturday. One of them is from Job 14.

DARRELL DELANEY

Starting in verse 7, it says: At least there is hope for a tree; if it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. ⁸Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, ⁹yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. ¹⁰But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. ¹¹As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, ¹²so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep. ¹⁴If someone dies, will they live again?

SCOTT HOEZEE

Good question, Job. So, here are words that the Church has us reflect on that reflects on the grim fact, Darrell, that death comes to everybody, and it is so final. In fact, anybody who has ever lost a loved one knows that that finality of death...that inability to reach your loved one again...that is crazy-making. That is almost suffocating when you are in a time of grief. There is nothing we can do to bring this person back; they are dead. All throughout history, people have known that. They have known what we just read from Job. A

tree stump could sprout again, but not a human stump. When we are dead, we are dead, and that, as they say, is that.

DARRELL DELANEY

And so, scripture says that it is appointed to people to die once and then the judgment; and so, the death of people is permanent. If you don't believe in Jesus, it is period; it is the end; that is it; and that is something that can be extremely painful and traumatic for folks; and that is why grieving is so hard because you know you are not going to see them again; and Jesus was dead. He was the one who died; and specifically, it talks about his death in John 19, where it says:

³⁸Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Everybody in Jesus' day knew what dead looked like, and Jesus was dead. You know, you cannot let the dead linger, right? I mean, the body doesn't keep, so you have to do something. Embalming techniques have changed over the centuries. Today, funeral homes replace all the blood in the body with kind of a somewhat preserving fluid, formaldehyde. In Jesus' day, they wrapped it up like a mummy; and those...that aloe any myrrh that Nicodemus brought along...that would make the strips of linen stick like glue, but who cares? Nobody is ever going to take it off again.

Also interesting, I remember when I was a kid I was struck by the line: It was a new tomb. Nobody had ever been laid there before. It is like, but that is because we think of how we bury people today. Of course, nobody...you know, you only bury somebody in the same spot once; but back then, they would let a body decompose until the wrapping just contained bones, and then they would go take it out and they would put the bones in a box called an ossuary. So, you could use a tomb more than once for more than one body, once the decomposition process went on; but the point being again, Darrell, he was dead—dead as any human being had ever been.

DARRELL DELANEY

And that is why John goes into all the details to explain what happened at his death and what happened with his body, because there had been a lot of false teachings that came after this that said: Oh, no, no; he was just faking it or he didn't fully in his humanity experience everything that they do in death, but they are showing right here that all the details...he is slowing it down so that we can see: Oh, no; this is Jesus in his humanity. This is what...he is dead, dead. He is not coming back. It is clear that he is dead. From the human perspective, that is where all their hope went, and they know that he is gone.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And so, the question, again...on Holy Saturday...the question that Job 14 passage focused for us was: Well, is that it? If somebody dies, can he rise again? Well, the answer is, generally speaking, no. There didn't seem to be much hope here.

So, Darrell, Holy Saturday is a day in which we ponder these grim things. Of course, the problem is we often don't because we know what is coming on Sunday, right? But it is a good thing for us to do to reflect a little bit more again: A) On the complete sacrifice that Jesus made: B) On the complete, wonderful, and unexpected nature of what God the Father will do.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think it is beautiful that we have Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday, because if we had Good Friday and then Easter Sunday with no Holy Saturday, there is no time to ponder these things. It is kind of like God put in a twenty-four-hour period so that you can selah...so that you can reflect on it...so you can

think about it, because it changed everything, and it has a variety of emotions that come with it; and so, Holy Saturday is the day that you reflect on it. Okay, Jesus died on Good Friday, and now we have all day today anticipating the Easter Sunday and not rushing the fact that he is celebrating, that we are going to celebrate, but really thinking about can this guy live again? Can this Jesus live again?

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you know, it is hard for us to put ourselves in the mindset of the disciples back then who had no hope on Holy Saturday. It was done. They were just completely disoriented. Hard for us to do that. Hard for us to suspend our belief at Easter long enough to try to empathize with them, but it is an important question: If someone dies, can they live again, Job asks in Job 14:14. Can they? Stay tuned.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And Jesus died on Friday, which is the day before the Jewish Sabbath, which is a Saturday...Holy Saturday, Darrell, as we have been saying; but because the day after Jesus' death was the Sabbath, his friends and followers had to observe the Sabbath, right? They couldn't do anything more that day. So, Luke 23 tells us that: ⁵⁵The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid in it. ⁵⁶Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, I mean, they couldn't do anything because the commandment says that you cannot work. Nobody is working. They had this since the law of Moses, so they had been practicing it their whole life. So, they are not going to do anything with Jesus' body on this day. It is kind of like also God giving them another opportunity to sit in it and reflect in it and not to rush past it. Whatever grief they had; whatever disorientation; whatever emotion they had, they had to sit there and process that; maybe in prayer; maybe in song; maybe together; maybe alone; but this Holy Saturday is when they had the opportunity to do that. I am imagining that the food from the Sabbath that they had for Sabbath supper probably tasted different, because, I mean, it is not the same anymore. Jesus is not instituting it. He is not sitting there with them. So, it is the first meal they have had without him.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It had to be a time of complete disorientation. I mean, when something this bad happens, everything you had thought you knew, you don't know; everything you had thought would be true. It is like the travelers to Emmaus when Jesus...but they don't know it is Jesus...joins them and says: What is wrong with you? They tell him: Don't you know, you know...and then they said that terrible line: We *had* hoped he was the one...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We *had* hoped. That is heartbreaking.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is really sad because when you put your faith and trust in anyone, and then they are not there for you, then all your hopes are dashed; and for anyone who has ever lost a loved one, you understand the pain that comes with losing the one you cared about; the one you loved. But then these women...they were so in love with Jesus that they could not wait until the very full day. They went early in the morning to go see Jesus and actually minister to his body. They could not wait because they were so in love with him.

SCOTT HOEZEE

This is John 20: ^{1b}While it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” So, the women concluded what we would all conclude of we saw a grave had been messed with. Somebody did something with the corpse. I like it that the women say: *They* did something...*they* took the body...we don’t know where *they* put it. The women put it that way because Jesus didn’t move himself.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, if you are dead, you cannot move yourself; and so, they are thinking in the natural. So, if you are thinking in the natural, you are like: Hey, dead people don’t get up. They are not expecting a supernatural miracle here. They are expecting to go see the body of Jesus that was put in there yesterday, because they are living in the early and practical world. People die, they don’t come back. We want to go see our Jesus, and he is not there. So, they feel like there must be some sort of conspiracy.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; they didn’t go there to see if he was still there. No; they went with more spices, maybe to kind of finish what Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had done when they laid him in the tomb yet late Friday before the Sabbath. They just went to finish the embalming, but you know, they didn’t go to check to see if he was still there. That is why I always think it is interesting, Darrell, that, you know, nobody in the Bible...in all four gospels...nobody, when they eventually encounter the living Jesus...nobody said: Ha! I knew it; I just had a sneaking suspicion you’d be back, Jesus; and I was right. Woohoo! Good to see you! Good to see you back; I fully expected... No! Nobody reacted that way. They weren’t expecting a miracle, as you just said.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is definitely the twist in the story that changes everything. Don’t you love when you watch a good movie or read a good book and there is a twist that really grips you like, wow; I did not see that coming. No; I’ve been reading the whole story; I hadn’t seen that coming. And this resurrection is that twist; and so, like actually right here in John 20, it picks up where the twist happens:

¹¹Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

So, she didn’t recognize that that was Jesus at that moment. She was caught up in her grief.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, scientific and psychological studies have shown, Darrell, that we often see what we are looking for, right? When you are not expecting to see somebody, it is so easy to look past them. She wasn’t expecting to see Jesus. So, why didn’t she recognize Jesus? Well, among other reasons, she wasn’t expecting him. This was beyond the realm of possibility. So, she saw what she wanted to see, which was not Jesus, because it couldn’t be Jesus. So, of course she didn’t recognize him; and soon enough, the disciples are going to join in on the head-scratching wonder of who had done what with Jesus, because I know Jesus didn’t do anything for himself—he didn’t move.

So, we read this also. This is from John 20 as well:

³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw

and believed. ⁹[But] (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

So, what? The tomb is empty. Something is up, but we don't know what, so let's just go home. That is what they do!

DARRELL DELANEY

So, the part that we didn't read between that is when Mary Magdalene got the revelation that it was Jesus because he revealed it, and she goes back and says: I have seen the Lord. Which is the first preached Gospel ever! He is alive. He is risen. They didn't believe her, so they did this race to the tomb; and so, they don't fully understand what is happening because no one has ever done this before. I mean, it makes sense from the natural; they...I mean...no one has ever resurrected, so we wouldn't expect that to be a real story. She's got to be out of her mind. We've got to go see for ourselves.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, and Luke picks it up. We read in John 20, let's jump to Luke 24. We are told the women tell the Eleven that Jesus was alive; and you know what it says in Luke 24:11? But [the disciples] they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

DARRELL DELANEY

But this is where Easter begins in scripture. It is when sorrow and death thought they had the last word, but darkness and fear cannot have the last word because he resurrected; and in the context of the pain and the sorrow, we still see hope; and that is the hope we have today.

SCOTT HOEZEE

God had a plan. God had something up his sleeve; and as we wrap up this program and this short series on Holy Week, let's dig into some more passages that get at that thrilling moment when the disciples really did begin to believe Jesus had been raised. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and all four of the gospels, Darrell, except for Mark, which ends very abruptly...but the other three gospels give us a solid idea of what a real encounter with the living Lord Jesus looked like. So, let's just really quickly, Darrell, tick through what happened when people actually knew it was Jesus. We will start with Luke 24; and this is, of course, the couple that had gone to Emmaus. They ended up walking with Jesus along the road, and then they recognized him at dinner and then he disappeared; and so, this is Luke 24:33: (paraphrased) They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven, ³⁴saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵Then the two told what had happened to them on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. ³⁶While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." ⁴⁴[He said to them,] "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He told them, "This is what is written: 'The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'" So, that is Luke 24, when Jesus makes a solid appearance.

DARRELL DELANEY

And now, we look at John 20, when he makes a solid appearance. It says: ¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²²And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

SCOTT HOEZEE

Finally, the post-resurrection appearance from Matthew 28:16: Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷When they saw him they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

DARRELL DELANEY

What is beautiful here, Scott, is just like we saw the gospel slowing the time down to show you the details of the actual death. They are showing and slowing down and showing the details of his actual resurrection and what happens after; and showing that there had been eye witnesses, many of them. Scripture says there were over five hundred of them in the book of Acts that saw him after he resurrected, after he came back from the dead; and even though they are thinking in the natural, and they get scared because they think: Oh, this could be a ghost; he is like: I am proving to you that I am not a ghost. You can touch me; you can give me fish to eat, but I am alive; I am here; and I am in the flesh, literally.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I love the realism of the Bible. Again, they didn't pretend...what we said earlier...nobody who encountered the risen Jesus said: Oh, there you are; I knew you'd be back; good to see you. No, no, no, no. They were shocked; they were scandalized; they were scared, yes: Is it a ghost, you know. Even in Matthew 28, they worshipped him, but some doubted yet, right? This was a new thing; this was a history-shattering, earth-shaking, new thing God had done that showed that death did not have the last word. Of course, the people who first encountered this at first were not quite sure. Was it too good to be true? Am I seeing this? Is this really happening? The Bible is utterly realistic about all that.

DARRELL DELANEY

And so, I think that is one of the reasons why we don't spend a lot of time thinking about that or having the anticipation of what Holy Saturday is supposed to bring because we already know the answer to the story. We've been to many Easter Sunday services. We have been secure in understanding that it is finished, and he has risen; and so, we really don't spend a lot of time with Holy Saturday, like we should; but if we reflect on what God has done, I think it would make worship even more powerful on Sunday.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I think that is right. What a lot of us do on Holy Saturday, and Easter is one of the days of year when I really enjoy cooking, so I often spend Holy Saturday getting food ready for Easter dinner, right? I mean, the ham is in the fridge; I'm peeling potatoes. You know, you are getting ready for Easter dinner the next day; so, yes; we don't spend time on Holy Saturday, you know, reflecting on how dead Jesus was; but maybe we could try a little harder to appreciate the true shock and wonder; but also the joy, Darrell, right? The thing that, you know, when you sort of don't appreciate how shocking it was for the original disciples. The other thing we undercut is our own joy.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We should want to have all the joy...I mean, the Bible says we will spend all eternity singing about and thinking about the resurrection. So, if that is how we are going to spend eternity, we can do a little of that right here and now, couldn't we?

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, we could. It is really exciting for us to know that God addresses this situation, and he uses Jesus to erase and reverse the curse. We talked about Jesus being the last Adam in the last episode, and how God addresses the whole sin problem, and everything that is wrong with the world with this weekend. What I preached before is that it took us a couple thousand years to mess up the world in our brokenness, but it only took him a weekend to turn it around because of his powerful resurrection, because of the atonement sacrifice, and we are excited about that. Those are the things that we reflect on and we think about.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And we looked at 1 Corinthians 15 in the previous program. We can look at it here, too, because, you know, nothing about Easter was inevitable. Only death is inevitable...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The death of each one of us. I mean, you never go to the obituary section of a newspaper or a website for news and see none, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I mean, if we went a whole week in this world and nobody died, we'd be shocked. That is just not how it goes. Death is inevitable. Resurrection is not; and yet, God made it now a new inevitability; as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:

²⁰Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ^{54b}Then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So yes, indeed, Darrell, God has given us the victory through Jesus. Jesus now shares that victory with all of us.

DARRELL DELANEY

Christ is risen!

SCOTT HOEZEE

Risen indeed!

Darrell Delaney/

SCOTT HOEZEE

Hallelujah!

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue to dig deeply into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives.

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DARRELL DELANEY

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