

364: April 12: Easter (Come Follow Me Book of Mormon Week 13)

Framing: I imagine we are all feeling the preciousness of life and relationships, and feeling our own mortality and the fragility of life. It's a costly truth that we are literally unable to feel the preciousness of life until it is threatened.

We like to focus on the hope of Easter, and that's beautiful. For this episode, I'd like to focus on the work of death and resurrection.

Learning to die is one of the most important lessons of life. (Hospice has changed me, grounded, patience, perspective, dosing, slowing down, put me in order)

This is an opportunity for us all to be confronted with ourselves, but also check in with ourselves. (Also, I can't believe it's Easter again!)

House Church for Easter:

Song: Amazing Grace or Upon the Cross of Calvary

Prayer:

Sacrament (Read the account of the Last Supper before blessing and taking it)

Lesson: To Die and Live Again

- Celebrating Easter
- Celebrating Holy Week
- Learning to die
- Learning to live/again

Devotional/Conclusion: The Journey, by David Whyte

Covid Check in:

Current priorities: Stop the spread. Get supplies. Prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed. Stay home as much as possible. Wear a mask.

The most vivid reality check for me was when I learned that New York City is storing bodies in refrigerated trucks because the morgues are overwhelmed.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/fema-is-sending-85-refrigerated-trucks-to-new-york-city-to-serve-as-temporary-morgues-2020-04-01>

Keith Lamar, 27 years solitary confinement: Being in solitary confinement is really just being thrown upon yourself: You're running around, just like people do in your regular

life, and now all of a sudden you're confronted with yourself, and find that in a lot of cases you haven't really put anything into yourself to occupy yourself.

What's next?

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/there-isnt-going-be-all-clear-signal/608512/?fbclid=IwAR3e8QkQr1e1wozAQGUJ-LAHx8t9PszAIDqkMUjdG9YaWIQS7ujCtCHZWEY>

[Juliette Kayyem](#)

Former Department of Homeland Security official and author of *Security Mom*

Get your battle rhythm, I keep telling myself, as I put on my oversize sweatpants for the third day in a row. Staying inside, away from our offices, routines, and community, feels jarring even for those who, on a rational level, understand the need for extreme social distancing. The good side is having more family time. But everything seems upended, even to homeland-security professionals who argued for upending everything to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Just as seasickness abates once you can see the shore, the disruptions that the country is now experiencing would be easier to manage if we knew they would end soon. The community-isolation effort happened remarkably fast—within days, whole communities all but closed down, and earlier this week the federal government finally recommended the same. On Thursday, Governor Gavin Newsom ordered the entire state of California to stay home “until further notice.” But the way the crisis ends will be far more muddled. There isn't going to be one all-clear signal—and certainly not one anytime soon.

From a public-health standard, the pandemic will not end for another 18 months. The only complete resolution—a vaccine—could be at least that far away. The development of a successful vaccine is both difficult and not sufficient. It must also be manufactured, distributed, and administered to a nation's citizens. Until that happens, as recent reports from the U.S. government and from scientists at London's Imperial College point out, we will be vulnerable to subsequent waves of the new coronavirus even if the current wave happens to ebb.

So, that's the plan. Sometime between now and when a vaccine becomes available, restaurants and schools and offices will reopen. It won't happen all at once, as if by official decree, but as individual households and workplaces conclude one by one that they've had enough—and that the surge in testing kits, intensive-care beds, and other resources is finally sufficient to meet the need. That won't take a year and a half. But I expect to be in these sweats for at least another month—and I'm planning for two.

Bill Gates throwing billions at this:

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/bill-gates-says-hell-spend-billions-on-coronavirus-vaccine-development-2020-04-06>

“Our early money can accelerate things,” Mr. Gates said. “Even though we’ll end up picking at most two of them, we’re going to fund factories for all seven, just so that we don’t waste time in serially saying which vaccine works and then building the factory.” (which means he will “lose” billions, but he sees that in the perspective of the trillions the world economy is losing)

(Of course, our whole idea of economic growth needs to shift, but that’s a different topic)

Song: Amazing Grace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z64EAAMYG8c> (Charlotte Church)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYqwYpko6po> (Bocelli)

Il Divo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYMLMj-SibU>

Gentri: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80xnHaX7D3E>

Tabernacle Choir! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2arm5ydeJc>

or Upon the Cross of Calvary

Prayer:

Sacrament:

²⁰ When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve.^[b] ²¹ And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” ²³ He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me.” ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” ²⁵ Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the^[c] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

(I've shared that I suspect Jesus might have been hoping that God would vindicate him during his demonstration at the temple. Fix things then and there. That adds clarity and poignancy to the Last Supper and Gethsemane. Updating, accepting, reframing

Lesson:

- Celebrating Easter

What presses me on the most in this moment is that celebrating Easter without Holy Week is incomplete. More on that in a bit. Let's go through the resurrection narratives:

Mark 16

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶ And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

(This original ending of Mark puts the reader in exactly the position of the women. What are we going to do?)

Matthew 28

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he^[a] lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold,

Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

(Resurrection as the turning of the age. All things new).

Luke 24

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, ¹¹ but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should

suffer these things and enter into his glory?”²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.³² They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

“But we had thought this was going to be salvation...”

Finding a new way to think about our struggles and challenges and failures

My favorite scripture, up there with Moses 7.

John 20:11-17 (ESV)

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, [\[a\]](#) “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

(grief, preparation, don't recognize what is new/life, updating to what is, updating to new reality is the best definition of the work of grief.

Let yourself grieve

We grieve what was, and no longer will be

What was, and should not have been

What could have been, but was not

- Celebrating Holy Week

My notes from last year, and here we are:

I think the most significant thing about Holy Week is that it fosters a holistic approach to Easter. It is not cheap celebration; it is full priced, high cost joy. It does not just celebrate life. It celebrates new, glorious, unexpected life after the agony of disappointment, betrayal, loss, rejection, and the death of everything we know.

Sunday: **Palm Sunday** (Triumphal Entry, reflect on celebrating that knowing what is to come. Can we celebrate our worth and potential even knowing there will be failures and transitions and even death?) This Palm Sunday, I **am** celebrating triumph. Goals are coming together I have been working on for years, and dreams I have had my entire adult life are looking possible.

Chance to do the Hosanna shout! Very fitting.

Monday: Holy Monday (Anointing at Bethany, royal and burial) (Preparation and promise, shift from royal celebration to getting ready for the hard parts)

Tuesday: Holy Tuesday (Passion predictions, awareness of transitions, the death of what is)

Wednesday: Spy Wednesday; "Tenebrae" (extinguishing of candles. Betrayal by Judas, reflection on how we betray and are betrayed) Letting ourselves and others down is a feature of being human. How we **respond** is what matters most. Not perfectionism, but a broken heart and contrite spirit, humility

Thursday: Maundy (not Monday, describes ritual of footwashing) Thursday, Last Supper, washing of the feet (reorienting, finding new meaning in old symbols, love and service)

Friday: Good Friday (Crucifixion/Death)

Saturday: Black Saturday (Burial, moments of grief, slowing down, stopping, quiet rest, however painful)

Sunday: Easter Day (Resurrection, new and continuing and renewed life we didn't even know was possible)

- Learning to die

In life we deal with the big death and little deaths.

I obviously haven't died yet, though I am fortunate to spend time with those who are.
(talk about dealing with our mortality and decline, literally my job, how quickly things can change, catch up, fall apart)

Every day, every week, every year, adjust to our new version of our body with gratitude.

I have much more experience with little deaths (went from avoiding them experiencing as catastrophic to welcoming them

Spend the currency of pain and consequence

Grieve and process, metabolize our little deaths, betrayals, our own and others

- Learning to live (again)

The work of resurrection: "All things new"

"I have come that they might have life, and have it overflowing"

Shiva: The death and destruction that makes room for life and renewal

We don't "get over" or even "let go" of things, but we can soften our grip on the past. We can let go of our stories. We can learn to accept what is, even love what is.

"All things new" Every day new. Each morning is such a gift. Sleep is a symbol of death, waking a symbol of resurrection. Let yourself feel wonder. (I'm growing into a point where I am genuinely grateful for my life exactly as it has been... after spending years depressed and grieving)

Grief into gardens, death into life.

- Conclusion

David Whyte, The Journey:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PK3GhnHOJc>

THE JOURNEY

Above the mountains
the geese turn into
the light again
Painting their
black silhouettes
on an open sky.

Sometimes everything
has to be
inscribed across
the heavens
so you can find
the one line
already written
inside you.

Sometimes it takes
a great sky
to find that
first, bright
and indescribable
wedge of freedom
in your own heart.

Sometimes with
the bones of the black
sticks left when the fire
has gone out
someone has written
something new
in the ashes of your life.

You are not leaving.
Even as the light fades quickly now,
you are arriving.