**The Voice that Calls Us to Rise**
*Fourth Sunday of Easter (Year C)*

In a world of competing voices—fear, division, lies, impatience—and yet the voice of Jesus continues to call to us: a voice of trust, not coercion; of love, not certainty. Today we listened again for the Shepherd's voice that restores communities, bends the arc of history, and invites us into the work of rising together.

Before Tabitha rose, before Peter knelt and prayed, before the Good Shepherd spoke of hands that cannot lose us—there is a core question:

***What are the voices that are shaping our lives? Ask yourself!***

It was winter in Jerusalem. The Festival of Dedication—the remembrance of the temple's restoration—was underway. In the shadowed colonnades of Solomon's Portico, the leaders pressed in around Jesus:

***"How long will you keep us in suspense? Tell us plainly: are you the Messiah?"***

This is not merely a simple honest question. It is the angry voice of impatience.

We want certainty. We want clarity. We want answers that fit neatly into our timelines, our expectations, our comfortable no stress zones.

And so, it is today in the world around us.

Our world is filled with competing voices—shouting across headlines, Google and AI algorithms, news cycles and pulpits. Questionable Voices that promise easy answers. Governmental Voices that traffic in fear, division, and control. Voices that demand we pick sides based on scarcity, suspicion, anger and demonization of the other. Voices that attempt to move us back to an idyllic time that never was.

These voices grow louder when our patience wears thin. When injustice seems endless, when hope feels fragile, when love feels like a losing game—we, too, want to say:

***"How long, O Lord?"***
***"tell us plainly. Make it obvious. Fix it now. Make our pain go away"***

The voice of Jesus does not shout over the noise. It calls quietly, insistently:

***"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me."***

Not follow a movement. Not follow an ideology. Not follow a cultural panic.

Follow *me.*
Follow love.
Follow life.

The voice of Jesus invites—not with wild promises, but with trust. Not with spectacle, but with mercy.... courage, and action.

In today's passage from Acts, we understand what following that voice looks like in a weary world.

Tabitha—Dorcas in Greek—a disciple, an artisan of compassion, a saint of the everyday—falls ill and dies. Her community grieves, cradling the garments she had sewn, the lives she had touched.

Peter now a leader of the disciples is called to this house grieving and filled with sorrow.

This is the same Peter that represents all of us.... let's consider a few of Peter's scriptural stories....

1. Peter Walks on Water Toward Jesus

Peter says, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He steps out in faith but sinks in fear. Jesus saves him and says, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

2. Peter Confesses Jesus as the Messiah

Peter boldly declares, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus blesses Peter for this revelation, calling him the rock on which the church will be built.

3. Peter Rebukes Jesus for Predicting His Death

Immediately after his confession, Peter resists Jesus' path of suffering. Jesus sharply rebukes him: "Get behind me, Satan!" revealing Peter's misunderstanding of what it means to follow.

4. Peter's Question about Sacrifice and Reward

Peter asks, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Jesus promises reward but redefines greatness in terms of servanthood.

5. Jesus Washes Peter's Feet

Peter resists: "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus replies, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Peter then says, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

6. Peter Declares His Loyalty at the Last Supper

Peter insists, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." Jesus prophesies Peter's denial before the rooster crows.

7. Peter's Denial of Jesus

In the courtyard, Peter denies knowing Jesus three times. After the rooster crows, he weeps bitterly—his failure starkly revealed.

8. The Resurrection Appearance and Restoration

Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love me?" After each affirmation, Jesus commands, "Feed my sheep." This echoes and redeems Peter's three denials, commissioning him again for leadership.

Peter is growing in his discipleship. He does not shout a newsworthy slogan. He does not sit in the corner and weep.
He kneels.
He prays.
And with unbelievable courage Peter surprises us and speaks the words he remembers of Jesus....

***"Tabitha, get up."***

She opens her eyes. She rises. And with her, the community rises as well.

Resurrection is not magic. It is the slow, steady restoration of the Beloved Community.

**Where is God calling us to restore life—not just within individuals, but in all the broken, grieving, frightened, persecuted, or marginalized parts of our world?**

The rising of Tabitha is not the erasure of death's reality—it is the refusal to let death be the final word. It is the community choosing to weave life back together again. It is resurrection as resistance.

***"No one will snatch them out of my hand,"* Jesus says.**

In a world fraying at the edges, where violence, hatred, and despair daily grow unchecked, we are tempted to believe the rising will not come.
We grow impatient. We watch as thing fall apart.
We are haunted by the fear that the arc of history bends too slowly.

How many of us have family, friends, neighbors, that live in fear of the chaos that surrounds us?

Desmond Tutu guides us with his outrageous words to his oppressors:

*"You have already lost. Come: join the winning side."*

It was not a taunt. It was resurrection hopefulness.

He understood that the arc of history does not bend on its own.

*As MLK taught us.... "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."*

It bends because love keeps pushing.
It bends because faithful people keep rising up, keep working, keep dreaming.
It bends because Jesus voice keeps calling—through prophets, through poets, through weeping communities and stubborn dreamers.

Bending an arc is not passive work. It does not bend on its own.

It takes listening for the voice of love amid the cacophony of noise.
It takes patience fierce enough to withstand disappointment.
It takes stubborn faith in resurrection to walk in love when all the noise surrounding urges us to give up.

Pope Francis reminded us that we are not called to be gatekeepers of certainty but field hospitals of mercy.

*"The thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful, It needs nearness, proximity."*

In chaotic times, our nearness to the voice of the Good Shepherd—and our nearness to one another—is itself an act of resurrection.

It is a voice that calls us from deep within our soul....to practice, practice, practice resurrection. And as Peter, To Feed my sheep, feed my sheep, feed my sheep.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What voices in this chaotic time am I choosing to follow?
    - Are they distracting, is the volume so loud that chaos is all that I hear?
    - Do they make me angry, so much so that I am immobilized?
    - How might I listen more deeply for the voices of love and restoration? How do I center myself and hear, really hear the gentle words of Jesus?
- Where in my life, is The Holy Spirit already bending the arc toward justice—and how am I being called to join that holy work?
- Where in my beloved community is The Creator waiting for me to participate in the restorative work of healing, raising the dead, feeding the hungry, walking with the immigrant and stranger?

*Jesus calls us: "Rise up and follow me" "Trust that no power, no violence, no despair can snatch you from my hand." (John 10)*

Listen to the voice of love.
Restore what has been broken.
Trust that life will not be taken.

The rising has already begun.

There is work to do.
The arc is bending.

*Practice resurrection.*
*Dream on—for from your dreams, a new creation is being made.*

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.