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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
MARCH 27, 2005
ELKHORN, NEBRASKA
PASTOR MARK FRY

1 (No Woman No Cry By Bob Marley -
2 Performed by Elwin Moseman)

3

4 "No woman, no cry, no woman, no cry
5 No woman, no cry, no woman, no cry
6 I remember when we used to sit
7 In the government yard in Trenchtown
8 Oba, ob-serving the hyprocrites
9 As they would mingle with the
10 Good people that we meet
11 Good Friends we have had
12 Good Friends we have lost
13 Along the way
14 My feet are my only carriage
15 So I've got to push on through
16 But while I'm gone I say
17 Everything's gonna be alright
18 Everything's gonna be alright
19 Everything's gonna be alright
20 Everything's gonna be alright
21 Everything's gonna be alright
22 Everything's gonna be alright
23 Everything's gonna be alright
24 Everything's gonna be alright

25

1

2

So, no woman, no cry

3

No woman, no cry

4

Please, little darling,

5

Don't shed no tears

6

No woman, no cry."

7

8

(Applause)

9

THE COURT: Thank you, Elwin. Our resident Bob

10

Marley, Elwin Moseman. Thank you, Elwin.

11

That is a song you literally can go anywhere in the

12

world and you are going to hear the refrain of that song.

13

Everything is going to be all right.

14

If you go to Africa I would bet that is one of the

15

songs you will hear in the city streets.

16

It is a song by Bob Marley about you don't need to

17

cry anymore. Everything is going to be all right.

18

It is a song about hope. It's a song about

19

redemption.

20

It's a song about how some day everything is going

21

to be all right.

22

And I want to hold that song out there, because

23

that's what I believe the angels and then Jesus is saying to

24

Mary in the story today.

25

He says no woman, no cry.

1 He says, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

2 And Mary is so blinded by her grief and by her
3 emotions that she is not able at that particular moment of
4 her life to understand why she's crying.

5 But, no woman, no cry. You don't have to cry any
6 longer.

7 So I am going to throw out two different questions
8 for you this morning and hopefully give you some things that
9 you can run with.

10 I want to ask, first of all, what are we crying
11 about?

12 And, secondly, what are we running to and from?

13 So I'm talking about crying and running and I'm
14 going to try to bring those together a little bit this
15 morning in the context of Easter.

16 Because Easter is so painfully early this year,
17 early in the day is my favorite part of the day, I love to
18 get up while it's still dark.

19 But I know I'm kind of in the minority that way.
20 There aren't that many of us that are early risers.

21 And this year, especially with Easter being so
22 early, I think it only comes earlier one time in the next
23 forty years than it did this year, so Easter is early and I
24 want to throw those things out there.

25 What are you crying about? And what are you

1 running from?

2 Because I'm fascinated. Some people like to be
3 busybodies in the morning and we are going to see some of
4 them in the text.

5 And the rest of us slowly flow into the morning,
6 and so crying, running, early.

7 Are you with me? Okay.

8 I'm fascinated as I read John 20, the two
9 paramounts of that are for me the motion and the emotion.

10 And that's why I am going with the motion, the
11 running; and the emotion, the crying.

12 So those are my bookends and I'm absolutely
13 fascinated by that.

14 Easter is a time for me to look in the rearview
15 mirror and look where I've been.

16 And I find myself between those motions and
17 emotions of Easter as my year, really, my year of 2004 going
18 into 2005.

19 Our family has been on the move. We have been
20 running around a lot.

21 I'm getting ready to finish the completion of my
22 income taxes for 2004 and it's amazing how much flying and
23 running around we did.

24 We were all over this country different times. So
25 we were in constant motion.

1 A lot of those trips we took and a lot of those
2 things that we were doing are also very emotional.

3 We were on the whole gamut this past year. We were
4 not only frequent fliers; we were frequent criers.

5 We celebrated weddings. We celebrated death. We
6 celebrated a partially empty nest.

7 And those are joyous things, all three of those
8 are, and yet within that motion there's also emotion.

9 So that's where my family has been in the last year
10 and I want to have you find yourselves in the story then
11 today.

12 We are going to go with that motion and emotion, so
13 turn to John 20, if you want to follow along with me.

14 I am hopefully going to shine a little bit of
15 Easter light on some of this story that in some ways is a
16 little bit confusing, but in other ways is so painfully
17 clear that it's obvious.

18 So the motion this morning is where I'm starting
19 out.

20 It must have been really one of those mountain top
21 lows for Mary that morning.

22 She got up early, it was still dark out, and what
23 we see right away in the text is she's walking, very
24 painfully we can only imagine, to the tomb.

25 Because if you have been following the story in the

1 19th Chapter, the last verse of Chapter 19.

2 "And so because it was the Jewish day of
3 preparation and the tomb was nearby they laid Jesus there."

4 Mary's best friend, who was always going to be
5 there for her, was dead.

6 And they put him in a borrowed tomb and she had
7 been crying probably for two days, because this was the man,
8 he's all that to her.

9 So she has been on this emotional roller coaster
10 and we can only imagine then the motion of that.

11 She's walking probably very slowly to the tomb that
12 morning while it's still dark out.

13 She doesn't want to stub her toe physically or
14 emotionally anymore.

15 She probably had had it with being around all the
16 other disciples and their grief.

17 And she's just going to go do the right thing and
18 go to the tomb and that's what we see her doing in the
19 story.

20 I see her walking somberly to the tomb before
21 sunrise. Her's is a slow pace.

22 She must have been sad and frustrated. I'll bet in
23 that previous twenty-four hours she was mad at the
24 government, the Romans.

25 She was mad at the church leaders, the Sanhedrin.

1 She was mad at the disciples, because they didn't have any
2 backbone.

3 She was mad probably at her own family and friends.
4 I wouldn't be surprised if she was mad at God.

5 And I wouldn't be surprised if she was even mad at
6 Jesus.

7 Why did you go so far? I thought you were going to
8 be there for me and you went off and you had to stir up the
9 religious leaders and the governmental officials, and what
10 did you expect? They were going to kill you.

11 So she has been mad and frustrated for a couple of
12 days now and we see her walking slowly to the tomb.

13 She gets there and she sees that the rock has been
14 moved.

15 In Verse 2, "So she ran."

16 She turns on her heels and heads in the opposite
17 direction now.

18 Her emotions have changed from being mad and sad to
19 being really mad and sad.

20 Because, can it get any worse? Somebody must have
21 stolen the body.

22 And so she turns in the opposite direction. She
23 starts running back.

24 She comes to Peter and John. John is the one that
25 the Bible describes as the younger, he's the less

1 experienced of the disciples, and so she comes and she says
2 they have taken away the Lord.

3 Those guys then do exact opposite of Mary. You see
4 what they do is, she walked slowly to the tomb and runs
5 away. Emotion caught up in motion.

6 And now what we see is John and Peter run to the
7 tomb. They are going in the absolute opposite direction.

8 They get there and for some reason one goes in and
9 one doesn't.

10 Peter gets there, he's a little slower, he's the
11 guy who is called the rock, so that is kind of a cool irony
12 there, that the rock is a little slower than the young guy,
13 but he comes to faith a little bit more quickly.

14 She runs to tell Peter and John, who in turn run
15 back towards the tomb, typical men, John was swift, Peter
16 wasn't so swift.

17 They had seen the evidence, or the lack thereof,
18 and so they are going to come to some conclusions.

19 The most popular TV show arguably on television
20 right now is CSI.

21 Are you familiar with CSI? I watch CSI. Sometimes
22 it's a little bit too much for me and I don't watch it.

23 But the thing takes place in Miami and in Las Vegas
24 and now in New York.

25 It is the most popular TV series, these three

1 different series, and my favorite one is the Las Vegas one,
2 because that woman from Nebraska is on there. I really
3 like her.

4 But CSI is a phenomenon now. I want to read an
5 article that I got in the mail last week.

6 "The CSI franchise, which shows now in Las Vegas,
7 Miami, and New York, has attracted so much attention among
8 the viewing public that it's having an impact on American
9 courtrooms and classrooms.

10 "The programs have popularized the study of
11 forensic science at universities nationwide, so much so that
12 at the University of West Virginia forensic science is the
13 most popular major for the second year in a row.

14 "The CSI shows have been around for a while. What
15 is new is that in American courtrooms the CSI effect is a
16 phenomenon.

17 "Courts around the country now screen their juries
18 to see who watches what CSI or cop shows on TV and have
19 discovered 70 percent of the jurors are watching these
20 programs.

21 "Many juries now hold higher standards for
22 courtroom science. They believe in its infallibility and
23 are less bored by forensic details.

24 "Crime scene procedures, DNA samples, laser-guided
25 projectile examinations, fingerprinting, accurate fiber and

1 chemical analysis, and luminal applications, and nationwide
2 data are harder and harder for the bad guys and the gals to
3 get away with murder.

4 "So it's a good thing. All this evidence has
5 coming to the fore; however, it's also a bad thing.

6 "The CSI effect has had some unintended
7 consequences.

8 "According to the Associated Press, jurors who have
9 seen all those televised shows have come to expect DNA,
10 fingerprints, and all kinds of irrefutable scientific
11 evidence in the cases.

12 "The problem is that in some cases, fewer than ten
13 percent of the homicide cases involve fingerprint or DNA
14 evidence.

15 "The result is that jurors aren't convinced even by
16 the kind of eyewitness testimony that used to nail down
17 convictions," writes Charles Peters in the Washington
18 weekly.

19 "In one recent case an eleven year old girl pointed
20 at the person on trial and said, "That's the man who shot my
21 father." The jurors found him not guilty, and one
22 explained, "I would have preferred to see some evidence,
23 like finding a gun with fingerprints."

24 It's both good and bad, this whole CSI thing, and
25 so the evidence that we see in the Easter story is a little

1 bit shady.

2 They didn't have DNA evidence back then, but I've
3 got kind of a new DNA that I want to expose to you today.

4 Because all they had was these grave cloths lying
5 there.

6 The DNA evidence was not yet discovered. DNA, some
7 people think it's the key to life, and it's the key to death
8 in convicting people.

9 We seek those keys to life and those keys to death
10 with motion and our emotions.

11 So here is what my DNAs are today. Doubt,
12 negativity, and apathy.

13 If we look closely at the Easter story we are going
14 to notice that doubt does not mean lack of faith.

15 Mary is arguably the most faithful of those who
16 came in contact with Jesus.

17 Doubt is faith's first cousin.

18 What I would like to point out is doubt oftentimes
19 is expressed through tears and so is faith expressed through
20 tears.

21 Negativity is kind of the second one. It's
22 counteracted by being in the right place at the right time.

23 I'll bet it would have been easier for Mary to hang
24 around a bunch of moping, crying, weeping people.

25 But something in her spirit urged her to go to

1 church that day. She went to the tomb.

2 Despite the negativity that is so powerful in this
3 universe of, you don't really believe that stuff, do you?
4 Doubt and negativity are close cousins, too.

5 Even John writes of Jesus telling these words in
6 John 20:29, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet
7 have come to believe."

8 There is a great statement in twelve step programs
9 that says fake it until you make it.

10 If you don't believe right now, at least be in the
11 right place where people who do believe are found.

12 That overcomes doubt and it overcomes negativity,
13 because that's how God's grace is found; in an empty tomb.

14 It's not a full tomb; it's an empty tomb.

15 So doubt and negativity and apathy.

16 I think the biggest enemy in the world today is
17 apathy. People just don't care about apathy.

18 People just don't care about a whole lot, and
19 that's really the hardest one to overcome.

20 It's overcome, I believe, in this story. It's not
21 even really an emotion, but it's overcome by motion, if you
22 look closely, because people in their negativity and their
23 doubt and their apathy, they start moving a little bit.

24 I don't know where and your family have been in the
25 last calendar year, if you have been like us, a frequent

1 flier and also a frequent crier, sometimes the most
2 important thing to do is just to move, just to do something,
3 to go somewhere, and maybe to go running for the first time,
4 instead of just dwelling on the doubt and the negativity and
5 the apathy and gazing at your navel, oh, woe is me.

6 That's kind of where Mary was. Can it get any
7 worse? They have stolen his body.

8 But this was no robbery, you see, and we will get
9 to that.

10 So that is kind of a hard question, are you
11 coasting, or are you just hanging around with people that
12 are negative and doubting and apathetic? That doesn't help.

13 I think it's fascinating if you look closely at
14 Chapter 20, Verse 10.

15 It's an interesting short little verse. "Then the
16 disciples returned to their homes."

17 Mary is caught up in the motion and emotion and
18 Peter and John get there and they look in and they go, yep,
19 he's not here, came to faith, and they just returned to
20 their homes.

21 It doesn't say how they got there. It doesn't say
22 if they walked or if they ran.

23 I suspect they probably ran. I don't know. The
24 Bible doesn't say.

25 It says they merely returned to their homes. Maybe

1 they are good Lutherans, no big deal, ho-hum.

2 Instead of going to Easter brunch, they just went
3 home to have a cup of coffee and watch the news.

4 That doesn't mean they don't have faith either. In
5 fact they do.

6 But it's kind of interesting. I think probably
7 what they did is they ran to the tomb and walked away,
8 because that would be just the opposite of Mary, and I think
9 that would be a cool paradox.

10 They ran there and they go, yeah, no big deal, they
11 saw and they believed, and then they just casually walked
12 back out.

13 Because they know they are going to need the
14 running energy later in the faith walk.

15 They are just the opposite of Mary, who walked
16 before running, but we'll never know that.

17 Their motion appears to equal their emotions. They
18 are quiet, stoic, and calm, like so many that are good in
19 the faith, at least on the outside.

20 Hyperactivity is not to be confused with belief,
21 but everything has changed.

22 So what is happening in the story is really kind of
23 incredible.

24 Mary is still stuck there. She's still blinded a
25 little bit and they come to faith and they leave.

1 And then the angels, they do that no woman, no cry.

2 "Woman, why are you weeping," down there in Verse
3 13, and she says, "They have taken away," she's convinced
4 it's a robbery.

5 The grave robbers have come and taken away Jesus
6 and finally she turns around and Jesus is standing there and
7 she doesn't recognize him and he says the same thing as
8 Elwin sang, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

9 You don't have to cry anymore, and she said, "Tell
10 me where you put him."

11 She's convinced it's a robbery, supposing him to be
12 the gardener it says.

13 And finally she turns and Jesus then calls her by
14 name in that fascinating verse, "Mary," he said, and she
15 just melts.

16 The emotion and the motion just fall into his arms,
17 but he won't let her hug him.

18 Arguably that 17th Verse is one of most troubling
19 verses in the Bible where he says "Do not hold on to me."

20 Don't hold on to me. I don't know how you read
21 that, but I don't think it's just the fact that, well, I
22 have not gone to heaven yet, so don't hold on to me.

23 Here is my theological take on that. I believe in
24 this world it's really not real smart to cling to love too
25 closely.

1 Those three little dramas moved me here when those
2 people were coming up.

3 First we had a mom and a dad and a baby, and we all
4 know, what a beautiful thing that is.

5 And then that was a pastor here who was kneeling,
6 and twenty years he has been a pastor, and it's just getting
7 to him.

8 And then Don, the man who was symbolically bringing
9 the flower up. Sixty years of marriage.

10 Those are the emotions and the motions of life, but
11 what Jesus says when he says don't hold on to me, he says
12 you don't want to cling too closely to love. You can't hold
13 it or hoard it.

14 In a suffering world there is no time to linger,
15 even in a sacred moment.

16 In other words, what I think Jesus is saying is,
17 you don't have to hang on to me because I'm going to hang on
18 to you.

19 And he says don't hold on to me. He says, in other
20 words, don't hold me back.

21 He says I don't know where you have been, the
22 emotion and the motion, but if you hold on to me too closely
23 it's going to slow you down. Let me hold on to you.

24 In other words, I think what he's saying is you
25 can't rewind the clock.

1 You can't go back to the past to the way it used to
2 be.

3 When you called me Rabbouni, that was an
4 affectionate word, teacher, but it's different now, Mary,
5 don't hold on to me.

6 Don't hold me back. I'm not a God of the past; I'm
7 a God of the present and the future, so don't hold me back.

8 I want to go into the future. I don't want to go
9 back to the way it used to be when it was dominated by
10 emotion and motion. Don't hold on to me.

11 And I wonder what she did right after he said that,
12 because it says then that, "Mary Magdalene went and
13 announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Lord," and she
14 told them that he said these things to her."

15 I wonder how she got there? I wonder if she
16 walked or ran?

17 She could have been upset. All she wanted was one
18 more hug.

19 Maybe she kind of thought, this is just like Jesus,
20 I mean, just the minute I get out of the boat it starts
21 changing again.

22 Don't hold on to me. Well, I'm not going to hold
23 on to you, almost a sense of resolution.

24 I suspect, though, that she ran. She finally got
25 it.

1 "Mary."

2 You see, what has happened is the lover has
3 penetrated the darkness.

4 That's what Jesus has done in this story, and so
5 it's a fascinating story about emotion and motion.

6 And if you look at all the different characters,
7 what they do, they are all changing.

8 Peter has moved from denial to devotion. John has
9 moved from youth to exuberance. Mary has moved from grief
10 to gratitude.

11 Their stories can't help but move us. I believe
12 that.

13 I think it's just a fascinating story of emotion
14 and motion.

15 And then there is this neat little thing happening
16 in the middle there, you don't really notice it at first,
17 but if you look at Verse 7, "And the cloth that had been on
18 Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled
19 up in a place by itself."

20 What is the big deal on that? That is kind of a
21 big deal, because Mary thinks the body has been stolen.

22 And the disciples get there and they see that it's
23 not a mess around there.

24 So they say this is no robbery. If this was a
25 robbery they probably would have tore the place up a little

1 bit more and they wouldn't have taken the time to fold up
2 the grave cloths.

3 What that tells me is that the sadness and the
4 motion and emotion of Easter is not March madness.

5 It's not just helter-skelter, you know, sneak him
6 out of here in the middle of night.

7 God came back and took his time with Jesus, and
8 they rolled up, cautiously, calmly, rolled up the pillow,
9 the little cloths there, neatly stacked them, to say I don't
10 know where you have been running to, and I don't know what
11 you have been running from, but you don't have to be in such
12 a hurry in your lives, smell the lilies, smell the coffee,
13 all that stuff, slow down a little bit.

14 I don't know where you have been, but I do know
15 where I've been.

16 I have been a frequent flier, a frequent crier,
17 driving all over trying to keep up in this crazy breakneck
18 speed of the world.

19 It's March madness, but it's also March gladness,
20 that basically says turn it down a few notches, smell the
21 roses.

22 Smell the lilies. They look like trumpets
23 announcing the birth of the Christ.

24 The disciples went away from the Easter tomb
25 changed people, and I want to think they ran away.

1 But, you see, the Christian walk is a walk, it's a
2 marathon and a sprint, and you have to slow down a little
3 bit because there are those times when you are going to need
4 to intensify the journey, and those other times when you
5 need to coast and take it easy.

6 I suspect now is one of those times we need to take
7 a few breaths, because some of us, when we get ready for
8 Easter, is the most hectic journey of all.

9 Are they all going to be there? Have you bought
10 the ham? Have you bought the turkey?

11 I was at Baker's the other day and it was like a
12 demolition derby with carts, it was incredible, but we need
13 to slow down.

14 If you are with your family, enjoy and soak in that
15 this weekend; and if you are not, thank God for where you
16 are.

17 I want to introduce my closing song snippet. One
18 of the frequent flier/crier things we did this last year,
19 Pastor Wenda and I went to New York and it was kind of
20 hectic.

21 It was one of those deals, and I don't need to tell
22 you the whole story, but basically what happened was we got
23 there and we went to check in, we were running late, it was
24 that one morning it flooded in Omaha, if you remember that
25 morning.

1 We went back the next morning and caught up with
2 Craig and Tracy in New York City then at the hotel and we
3 were just exhausted. It was pouring in New York. It was
4 brutal.

5 And on Saturday morning, Pastor Wenda is not an
6 early riser, Craig had been reading that Bryan Adams was
7 going to be playing at the Rockefeller Plaza for the Today
8 Show.

9 He said let's go. I said okay. Let's get up and
10 go. So we got up really early and Wenda slept in.

11 We went and saw Bryan Adams with Campbell Brown and
12 Lester on the Today Show.

13 We were in the front row. It was a great little
14 concert, but it was totally free. We just had to get up.

15 That's kind of like Easter. It's totally free.
16 God will get you up.

17 Anyway, long story short, Bryan Adams did this one
18 song there different times, it's called "Run to You" and
19 what I want you to know is you don't have to run anymore,
20 because that's when Jesus says don't hold on to me.

21 In other words, quit your running around. Now I'm
22 going to run to you.

23 You don't have to run to the tomb. You don't have
24 to run away from it. Now I'm going to run to you.

25 So go ahead, Brad, hit that song, and then we will

1 pray and let these guys sing.

2

3 "When it gets to too much

4 I need to feel your touch

5 I'm going to run to you

6 I'm going run to you

7 Cause when the feeling's bad

8 I'm going to run all night

9 I'm going to run to you."

10

11 There is no need to cry, but it's okay to cry.

12 There is no need to run, but it's okay to run.

13 Now, you see, Jesus says don't hold me back. I'll
14 run to you now.

15 You don't have to run to all your different
16 appointments and all your different things anymore.

17 But I'm going to run to you. I'm going to run with
18 you. I'm going to run for you.

19 The life of faith is a marathon and a sprint. You
20 have to stay hydrated.

21 That's why we did this water thing. You have to
22 stay hydrated.

23 You have to stay around the water, the living water
24 of Jesus Christ.

25 So I want to wish you happy Easter and if you would

1 be so kind to join me in prayer.

2 Oh, gracious God, we do thank you for slowing us
3 down a little bit today and yet speeding us up.

4 Thank you for Mary and Peter and John and those
5 disciples and those angels that are there for us, that keep
6 telling us you don't need to cry; but they are also there to
7 dry our tears.

8 Thank you, Lord, that we don't need to cry anymore,
9 we don't need to run anyway, because of Easter.

10 But be patient with us when we do, slow us down,
11 surround us by your grace.

12 We thank you, Lord, for being a Risen Lord,
13 conqueror of death, and we pray your blessing on our family
14 and friends this holy day. In the name of Christ. Amen.
15 Happy Easter everybody.

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