

Ages Ago and Just Yesterday

Luke 24: 1-12

It was about a year ago the week after Easter, that Oz Kavanaugh died. For many years, Oz served this congregation with love and devotion - as an elder, the clerk of consistory, a wise leader in various prayer ministries, an avid participant in Bible study and - her favorite, I know - teaching children about Jesus.

No one was expecting Oz to die. She was not ill or frail in any way, really. She was not old or weak or depressed or demented. She was fine. In fact, she came to my house for dinner last Easter Sunday, along with other guests, and we all had a wonderful time. But a week later, some time during the night, her life with us suddenly ceased.

On the one hand, it seems like just yesterday that she sat in the pew there, four rows back in the center section. When I close my eyes I can still see her tall frame and I can still hear her throaty voice: "Hi, Kathy. It's Oz."

At the same time, though, it seems like ages ago. Oz has begun to slip into personal and corporate memory. New members have come into the church and some have moved away - the place has changed. Other volunteers have stepped into her shoes on the consistory and with the elders. New leaders with new energy have expanded and strengthened the children's education program. Life goes on...time goes by...

Just yesterday, it seems, she was here and yet...it was ages ago.

For the women who came to the tomb early that Sunday morning, it was just yesterday, almost, that Jesus had still been with them. Then, late on Friday afternoon, before sundown, he had been crucified. They had seen it coming. It was the end of a bad week - betrayal by Judas, arrest, torture, trial, abandonment by his closest disciples, and then death by the most horrible means. But the women who had been following him from Galilee stayed on. They were there on the hill, watching as he hung on the cross and they saw Joseph of Arimathea take the body down, wrap it in linen and lay it in the tomb. They would have to wait until the Sabbath was over before they could return to finish the burial properly.

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came [back] to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body.

Where is Jesus? He was here just yesterday... But today he's gone?

Two men in dazzling clothes - angels we would presume - give the women their answer. "*Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you...?*"

To the women in the gospel account, the resurrection of Jesus Christ happened yesterday. To us it happened ages ago. **But in God's time, yesterday and ages ago get compressed into one time - ages ago is just yesterday.** We can begin to comprehend this idea when we think about the passage of human time. When we lose a loved one, like we lost Oz Kavanaugh, or as we watch our children grow and have children of their own, we can come to understand how ages ago seems like just yesterday.

I think that is what God wants us to understand about the events in Scripture. What happened literally ages ago - so far back that we can't scientifically or historically verify what actually happened - in God's time happened yesterday. Not only that, but yesterday is the present. **What God did ages ago, according to our measure of time, God is still doing.**