

I Will Rise (Still I Rise by Maya Angelou & Luke 24: 1-12) Rev Bob

You may write me down in history
with your bitter, twisted lies,
you may trod me in the very dirt
but still, like dust, I'll rise.

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen” (Luke 24:5).

“Why do you look for the living among the dead?”

It is a good question. After-all, the women who visit the tomb are not the only ones who are standing, staring in the wrong place. They are not the only ones looking for their savior in cold, empty, lifeless places.

It makes me think of the man who could be found, standing along the roadside nearly every day. If you were traveling, you would not even question why he was there. He would just appear to be on his way to getting the mail. But, if you traveled the stretch regularly, you would notice that he was there nearly every day, and you would also notice that there was no mailbox, nor even a house nearby. One concerned citizen, on their daily commute to work, had noticed the man repeatedly and eventually called the state police to check the guy out. Was he stalking someone? Had he lost his mind? Was he trespassing?

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
pumping in my living room.

We look around and search to find where the life and love of Jesus is present in the world, and then we join Jesus when we see it. That is what

living the resurrection life is all about! And would it not be great if we could all be a part of Jesus' great big task of finding God's love and then sharing God's love and promise of new life to the entire world? Would that be wonderful if we are all on board in this ministry of new life, risen life, for the sake of loving the world?

Just like moons and like suns,
with the certainty of tides,
just like hopes springing high,
still I'll rise.

After all, women's words are truly unbelievable. People do not come back to life. On top of that, fear is hard to overcome. Purpose is not easily figured out or obtained. And moving beyond grief is like climbing a mountain without ropes.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
diggin' in my own backyard.

Sometimes, people need to see for themselves. Sometimes people need to experience the truth for themselves. It does not matter how many times you tell your child that the medical procedure will not hurt, they will not believe you until they discover for themselves that it does not hurt.

Sometime people need to experience the truth for themselves. It does not matter how many times the Christian tells the confused and wandering

friend that they can find life, and meaning, and purpose in Jesus Christ. It all just sounds like an idle tale. It all sounds like cheap, fairy magic. They will not understand what new life in Jesus Christ is all about until they experience Jesus for themselves. Sometimes people have to experience the truth themselves.

You may shoot me with your words,
you may cut me with your eyes,
you may kill me with your hatefulness,
but still, like air, I'll rise.

I do not know his motivation for doing so. Did he go to the tomb in order to prove the women wrong? Did he go because he wanted to believe, but just could not bring himself to believe? Did he go because he was awash in guilt from denying Jesus and could not bear to be accused of denying him once again? Did he just need to go on a run and clear his conscience? I do not know the answers to any of that. The Bible does not tell us. Maybe, his running to the tomb was a mix of all of them. Whatever it was, it is absolutely the truth that he would never find himself standing there, amazed at the sight of the empty tomb of Jesus, until he went saw it for himself.

Going to the last verse...

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise!

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise!

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise,

I rise,

I rise.

Sometimes I think that is the best that we can do to help our friends and family when they are stuck looking for the living among the dead. Sometimes, the best thing that we can do to help them is to point them in the right direction and tell them to go look for themselves. “Experience it for yourself.” “Judge for yourself.” “Come with me and see for yourself.” Maybe, just maybe, they will experience the living God and “*be amazed at what had happened*” (Luke 24:12).

Maybe, they just need someone like you, filled with the risen life of Jesus Christ, to make them look into the tomb, point out that it is empty, and then point them in the direction of the one who is not empty: Jesus Christ our Lord. After all, he is risen, he is full of life, he is full of purpose, he is full of love, and he is waiting for all of us to run and see and catch up.