

Katie Langston 00:16

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Linda Booth 00:59

Welcome to Coffee Connect. My name is Linda Booth. And I love hearing and reading about and telling stories. Because for me stories are modern day scriptures that tell the story of Jesus's interaction in our lives today. And during the Lenten season, we're on a spiritual journey. And during Advent, we, of course, are on a journey to the manger and we celebrate the baby Jesus's birth. And now our journey takes us to the cross. And as you probably have read, just as I've read many religious writers who say without the cross, and the resurrection, we wouldn't be celebrating Christmas. So I want to tell you about a journey that I took one year. A journey to the cross that has forever changed me and my perspective of resurrection. It happened, oh, maybe 10-15 years ago, and I was preparing for an Easter sermon. I had read the 20th chapter of John verses 1-18 every morning and evening for several weeks, and had intentionally dwelled in the word causing me to experience the story of Mary Magdalene's journey to the tomb on Easter morning in a very personal real way. And on the Sunday before Easter, I woke up with tears in my eyes. As I relived Mary's walk to the tomb. All that day as I cooked and baked and cleaned and preparation for family coming over after the service. I thought about Mary and her tears, I realized that nothing had turned out how she thought it would. When the Romans arrested Jesus, she probably thought he'd be rescued and released. When he went to trial, she probably thought he would be rescued and found not guilty. And when he was nailed to the cross, she thought God would surely rescue Jesus and save him from death. But there was no rescue. And so she walked to the tomb crying, perhaps even sobbing. Her eyes were filled with tears when the two angels asked her woman, why are you weeping? And she cried out, they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have put him. Through her tears, she saw a man whom she thought was a gardener. And he asked her woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? And she told him, she was searching for Jesus's body. And she pleaded with him to tell her where the body was so she could return it to the tomb. And Jesus simply said her name, "Mary!" She turned and finally saw through her tears that Jesus was alive, standing right there before her. Mary had been hoping and praying for rescue. Instead, God gave her and all of creation, something far greater and transformative, resurrection. All during that day, I thought about the many times in my life when I prayed for God to rescue me or someone I loved. And then I thought about all those times when God hadn't given a rescue, but instead the gift of resurrection. The gift of resurrection through new hope, new ideas, new beginnings, new understandings, and new life. Over the evening meal, I excitedly share with my husband, Doug, the experience of that day, and how I was going

to incorporate our human desire for rescue and the divine gift of resurrection into my Easter sermon than ever Morning. As I chattered away, I realized Doug hadn't heard a word. Now it wasn't because he was ignoring me. It was because his blood sugar's had plummeted. My husband Doug has been an insulin dependent diabetic since he was about 26. He is what doctors describe as a brittle diabetic, meaning his blood sugars can drop suddenly. And when that happens, his brain shuts down. And when it does, he can fall into a coma. what he was doing in that moment, I rushed to the refrigerator to retrieve orange juice, something I had done many times before to bring up his blood sugars, but this time I couldn't get him to drink. He put his head back against the rungs of the dining room chair. He closed his eyes and he clenched his teeth. His breathing became erratic and labored. Perspiration ran down his face and saturated his shirt, pants and the chair cushion. And so I grabbed the portable phone and I stood by his side, as I dialed 911. I explained the situation to the woman who answered the emergency call. She told me to stay on the line in case Doug stopped breathing, so she could guide me on what to do. And I said, I stood beside the man that I had loved. I began to pray for God to rescue him, to bring him back to me. In that moment, Mary's journey and experience filled my soul and change my prayer. I knew God would bless us with resurrection in this life and the next. I knew that if Doug had died that evening, he had the promise of resurrection. And so did I and our entire family. I can testify that God is a God of resurrection, that God even in those dark moments in the sadness of our lives, God can reach us through the power of the Holy Spirit, and bring that understanding of God's presence and resurrection to life in our lives. And so as you prepare for your Easter celebration, may you look for resurrection all around you. It's there, you know, my friends, just be aware and celebrate that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Blessings to you this Easter season. May resurrection be real to you.

Josh Mangelson 07:57

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