

Resurrection of Our Lord – April 12, 2020  
Text: Matthew 28:1-10  
Theme: Children of the Banishment

**Once upon a time, in a faraway land, there was a powerful and handsome king married to a beautiful queen. They lived together in bliss in a truly fairytale life. They were happy. They had a beautiful home and they were very much in love. This was a relationship such as we can hardly even imagine in this dirty, sin-fallen world.**

**But, regardless of how handsome her husband was, regardless of how he provided for her every need, regardless of how much he loved her, he was just not enough for her. So, she began to look around to see if she could find a better husband. She did not understand that it was not her husband who was lacking. It was she who was lacking.**

**She moved from one man to another trying to satisfy an emptiness deep within her soul. She did not understand that this longing was of her own making. Whatever was missing was that which she had thrown out. Man after man after man passed through her life.**

**At first the king was patient with her. It was not easy for him to be patient because her choices in life hurt him deeply. He had given everything for her and while we might be tempted to suggest**

**that there are always two sides to relational problems, I can promise you that, in this case, all of the sin belonged to the bride. In this case, the king was completely innocent. As time moved on and man after man filed through her life, the king finally acted.**

**Now we might think that he would divorce her right? But he did not. He could not bring himself to divorce his bride because even though she had treated him so cruelly, he still loved her with an incomprehensible love. To divorce her would leave her unprotected in a hostile world. A divorced woman had no rights in their world and she would have no choice but to beg on the street. He chose not to divorce her, rather he sent her away. He banished her.**

**He determined that if she was going to have relationships with other men, she would not do it in his kingdom and so he banished her to a far off land. She knew no one. She had no power. She was all alone in her sin, all alone in her deception, all alone to live as an alien and consider what she had done to alienate her loving husband in his own home.**

**Many years passed. The woman died, but her children lived on, and their children. Then, one day the husband determined that it was time to reclaim his children. His bride had been sent away, but her children would be taken back into his loving care. They would**

**be brought into his palace, not as the children of a harlot, but as princes and princesses in his kingdom.**

**One day, when the children least expected it, their father, arrived. He caught them off guard, but they knew, nevertheless, who he was and what he had come to do. They had no red carpet to roll out before their father the king. They had no band to strike up to announce his arrival. They were unprepared, so they did the best they could. They took off their coats and laid them on the ground before him. They cut palm branches and strew them on the ground in front of him. They ran ahead of him and shouted his praises at the top of their lungs to let all know that their father had come to them to lead his children out of banishment and into their rightful place in the palace.**

**Sadly, however, it was not quite as easy as just leading them out of banishment and into the palace. It would have been wonderful if it were all that easy. They had been in banishment for a long time, and in that time they had become citizens of that foreign land. Their bloodline had been completely corrupted with marriages to the foreigners.**

**The Prince of this foreign land was not willing for his subjects to just walk away. No, he would demand a price – a weighty price. In fact, he would demand the very life of their father, the king, but**

**it would be nothing as easy and quiet as a simple execution. If he were to release these children of banishment, it would be worth his while.**

**Like Moses of the Exodus, the king went to the Prince of the foreign land and said, let my children go. But unlike Pharaoh, the Prince could not be persuaded. He was far too powerful. He had the children dead to rights and he knew it. The Prince beat the king, but the king did not retreat. In fact, he set his face like flint, for he knew that he had come for his children and nothing was going to stop him. He would rescue his children regardless of the pain, regardless of the cost, regardless of anything the Prince could throw at him.**

**The king suffered everything that could be suffered. He suffered death, but not just any death, death on the cross. But even that was not the full extent of the agony, for the Prince of this land of darkness would not stop. He had once managed to turn the bride away from this king and break his heart. He had even managed to tear his children away from him as well. But, that was still not enough. The Prince of Darkness would not stop until he had taken away his God. Only when the king screamed in agony, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Only then was the Prince finally satisfied.**

**Payment had been made. He owned the soul of the king and therefore he owned the children as well for who would rescue them now that their powerful father was his? That was the crucial error that the Prince of Darkness made. Exactly as he had done so long ago with the king's father, he underestimated the king. Who would have thought he could break the chains of the Prince of Darkness? Who would have thought that he was powerful enough to enter Hell and yet live? And not only did he live, but he left! He rose from the dead! This had never been done. This could not be done for if it were done...then that would mean...that the Prince of Darkness no longer had any power....**

**Yes, that is exactly what it meant. The king had given body and soul for his children because he knew with confidence that his father would never allow the Prince of Darkness to hold him. He knew that indeed the Prince of Darkness could not hold him for he was light, the very antithesis to darkness, and his very presence destroyed darkness.**

**And so, he rose, and he began to gather his children in preparation for leaving the foreign land and returning to his palace. The Prince writhed in mortal terror for he knew that he had been undone. Oh if only he had been satisfied with the bride. If only he had let the children go when commanded to do so. If only he had**

**spotted this king sooner and taken action more quickly, if only, if only, if only. But, it was too late. The deed had been done. He had been overconfident again, and this time, it had cost him his kingdom and indeed his existence for now the king was gathering his children.**

**The Prince of Darkness knew...he knows, that as soon as all of the children are gathered, we will be leaving his land and it will be all over for him. This morning you and I celebrate the day our king triumphantly rose from the dead and proved that he had done all that is required to redeem us. We have been bought back by our Father, and soon...very soon, we will be leaving with our king, and we will return to our rightful place in the palace.**