Easter 7 C 2022 Acts 16:16-34 **Rev 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21** John 17:20-26 **Scott MALCOLM**

He is the Alpha and Omega. The first and the last. The beginning and the end.

…

How many of us have done laundry this week? You know, washing our clothes. Gathering everything together, sorting it out. Coloureds over here, whites over there, under garments somewhere else. Putting it on, letting it wash and then hanging it up or putting it in the dryer. Laundry is one of those mundane, unsung jobs which we do for ourselves or those we love, and mostly, no one ever thinks about it.

Today it is relatively painless, an automatic machine does everything for us, other than loading and putting the powder in. Back when I was a boy (and many of you will remember way before then), it was a herculean task with an old wringer washing machine, it took ages and you needed to be strong and brave to use the dangerous appliances. People were always getting their arms in the wringers.

Before these we used a copper and a wash board, and before that, collected together at the river or lake and beat our clothes clean.

And how necessary is it? What would it be like if we didn’t have clean under clothes to wear? Pretty grim. Uncomfortable for a start and smelly for a finish.

Laundry, the most ordinary and unsung thing in all the world, but really important.

We have spoken about John’s hearers of Revelation. Down at the bottom of the hill with no real means of climbing any higher. And the only thing asked of them at the end of this book, at the end of the bible … is that they do their laundry. Wash their robes… in the blood of the Lamb …. So, they may have access to the tree of life and the gates of Jerusalem.

For John’s hearers doing this laundry, meant seeking faithfulness to that Lamb.

That Lamb who looks as if it’s been slaughtered, and unto whom everything belongs.

That Lamb who is alpha and omega. First and last. Beginning and end.

That Lamb.

It meant trusting that Lamb to carry them and help them no matter what came. Whether it be Caesars, false gods, persecutions or death.

And in this reading, laundry is the only thing asked of us as well. At the end of the book, at the end of the bible. The only thing asked of us is that we do our laundry. That we wash our robes so that we too, might have access to the tree of life and entrance into Jerusalem’s walls.

For us too, doing our laundry, washing our clothes, means seeking faithfulness to that Lamb.

Faithfulness in the face of Caesars who stalk our world peddling their unholy notions and ideologies. People who have more money and power than is good for anyone. People whose ideas take away from the disadvantaged, minorities, the disabled, women and people of colour. People like Putin who tell us their might is right and then take what they want. People like Trump who lie and lie. People like the NRA who shout to all who will listen … guns are good.

Caesars like Facebook and Twitter … algorithms that foster hatred and madness.

Faithfulness in the face of the false gods of materialism, and consumerism. Systems that tell us more is better, that spending is good for us, encouraging us to believe that money is king and people don’t matter. The perception that celebrities like Johnny Depp and Amber Herd are worth 5 minutes of news very night because they are rich and famous, haven’t they had enough of the earth’s resources already, they and those like them get richer and more famous, while whole continents of children go hungry. The idea that our purpose in life is to accumulate as much as we can for ourselves and for our families and who cares about everyone else. When the fact is, the more we have, the more we waste.

Faithfulness in the face of those who want to lead us in to the death that is greed and self-interest.

Faithfulness to that Lamb who said … love one another.

Faithfulness to that Lamb.

For us too, it means trusting that Lamb to carry us and help us,

Because no matter what comes … no matter what happens …

In the end … there is only one Alpha and Omega. One first and last. One beginning and end.

And I can assure you it is not the Caesars and false gods of our day.

So, we do our laundry.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Blood and bread. Bread and wine. Wine and water. Water and word.

This is who we are. This is what we are made of.

And this is where it leads us.

To the Spirit and the bride calling Jesus … to come.

To all who hear the words of Revelation calling Jesus … to come.

To us calling … all in the world who are thirsty … to come.

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