

So, Scully is really weird about people. I don't know if this is one of those things where I have turned my dog into myself, but she is just not the dog who immediately runs to every person she sees. She has a deep level of skepticism and a bit of introversion when it comes to some people. She is the dog that makes you earn her affection a little bit and if she doesn't like you right off the bat, or if she gets a weird vibe, it's going to be really hard to change it. Just ask my poor dad who wants nothing more than for Scully to love him and she just kind of wants nothing to do with him, no matter how hard he tries and no matter how much he loves dogs.

However, there is one person that just somehow got all the rules thrown out for him when it came to my weirdo dog. Our neighbor, Kevin, who lives kind of kitty corner to us. I don't even really know how it started. We would pass him on our walks while he was outside working in his yard and he would always tell us how cute she was and it eventually became a little bit of a joke that he would ask us if we wanted to sell her to him. Every time we passed by, "Oh, you brought my dog to me." "You ready to sell that dog yet?" But the fascinating thing was, what started as a joke just for him, because like Scully's thing. She adores this man now. It's like she could tell how much he loved her and her little puppy heart just responded. The treats he bought her helped a bit too, but that's neither here nor there.

Now, as get close to his house, she starts looking around, is he outside, is he outside? And if he's not, she literally sulks. The other day, she heard his voice clear in his backyard and pulled us down the driveway to find him. She did not care that this might seem rude. She heard his voice and knew he was out there and she just had to see him. No matter what she is deeply attuned to where he is. She knows his voice and immediately if she hears it, it's like her whole self responds. That's my friend! He loves me! I must go see him. It's adorable and honestly unlike anything I've ever seen with this dog who is usually so shy and a bit standoffish at first.

I think about how Mary Magdalene has to feel standing outside of the tomb today. She went searching for something...for closure...for the process of proper grieving...for Jesus...and he just wasn't there. It was like she was looking around and she couldn't find him, desperately scrambling and searching for something she could hold on to and there was just nothing. She had her expectations of what she would find in that tomb and when it wasn't there, her entire world crumbled. Her grief became impossible and it's like her whole entire self just shuts down and all she can do is weep because what is she supposed to do now? How is she supposed to grieve? How is she supposed to move on? How can she do anything now that Jesus is well and completely gone?

All it takes though is one little thing...Jesus' voice. Jesus' voice saying her name to completely obliterate the fog and haze of her grief and help her to see clearly. It's like when Scully hears Kevin's name and just *knows*, he's here. He's here for me. Mary can't recognize Jesus standing in front of her because she doesn't know how to process anything that is going on around her anymore. She's confused and lost and lonely and everything is just a complete mess, until she hears her name. Until she hears the voice that she knows is *home*. That one little syllable and everything is new, everything is clear, everything that was confused is settled, and it's like she finds herself all over again, because Jesus has found her. All of those feelings of being lost and afraid and lonely are wiped away in the reality of Jesus reminding her in the immediate moments of the resurrection that he knows who she is. He sees her. He knows her. He loves her.

Even on Easter Sunday, even in the bright light of the dawn that reminds us that God is always making all things new, it's easy to still feel a little lost, a little lonely, a little afraid, because let's face it the world we live in makes it very hard to not feel those things all the time. We are constantly faced with things that make life difficult and terrifying to face and it's hard to let go of that reality even on Easter. So it's possible this morning that you find your heart still feeling a little unsettled, a little uncertain, a little

anxious, a little sad. And that's ok. Those are perfectly normal Easter Sunday feelings...they're the ones Mary had too. Yet...into this new Easter dawn, Jesus does for us what he did for Mary. In the rushing waters of our baptism, Jesus reminds us that he knows our name. He calls us by name, and shakes the doubt from our eyes and the fear from our hearts and calls us home, home to him, to his love, to his grace, to the promise that even when the world feels overwhelming, he is there. He is not gone. He has not disappeared. He is right there in front of us, calling us by name.

This morning for the briefest of moments, try to lay whatever is ailing your heart down at the feet of your risen Lord. Let his voice fill you. Hear him calling you by name with the assurance that you are a treasured child of God, called, claimed, and named for grace and hope. Sometimes the world feels like a boulder, a stone that we cannot roll away, that we don't know how to roll away, and yet this morning, Jesus reminds us that God is always in the business of moving the immovable, God is always in the business of rolling away stones to reveal the promise of a new day. Jesus is calling to you. It's ok. Be not afraid. He is here. He is risen. He is standing right in front of you reminding you that you are beloved. That you are cherished. Let his voice fill your heart with exuberance. That's him! That's my Lord! He loves me! He is risen...risen *for me*. Alleluia! **AMEN!!!**