

I recently finished listening to Viola Davis' memoir *Finding Me* and in the midst of the stories about her childhood growing up in extreme poverty and her eventual rise to EGOT winner, there was one story that stuck out to me deeply. Viola is a woman of deep faith, and she shared the story of being baptized when she and her husband had found a church that felt like home to them. She said that when the decision had finally been made in her heart and mind, she then proceeded to adamantly tell her husband, Julius, that she couldn't get baptized that day because she had just been to the salon and her hair would be absolutely destroyed if she got it wet. Julius, in his frank Southern manner said, "Then put a Speedo on your head!" She was flabbergasted, she couldn't get baptized with a Speedo on her head, she would look ridiculous. But Julius was insistent, "Viola, God don't care what you look like, what your hair looks like, God cares about your heart." So...one of the finest actors of our generation threw a Speedo on over her hair and got baptized in front of a congregation that resounded with joyful laughter at the reality that yes, God doesn't care what your hair looks like, only that your heart is there, willing and ready.

John's telling of the wonder of the resurrection holds the same truth in so many ways, a truth that we need to hear on repeat. God just wants us as we are, God loves us exactly as we are, the resurrection is for us, exactly as

we are, Speedo on our head, Spirit in our heart. Look at John. He doesn't come across great in this story, even if while he was writing he probably thought he was making himself sound pretty fabulous. We have John who is insistent on letting the world know that Jesus loved him, John who wanted the world to know that whatever he was, he was faster than Peter. John who emphasizes that what he saw made him believe. John who comes off as cocky, boastful, and a little annoying, bends down and sees the linen wrappings in the empty tomb. The resurrection is for him.

We have Peter, a little slower of foot, still with echoes of the words of denial in his head. Peter who was brave enough to go into the tomb and see the wrappings and the cloth that had been placed over Jesus face, rolled up by itself. Peter who we aren't really sure what his reaction was to what he saw, if he was fearful, believing, uncertain, worried, ecstatic. Peter who stands in the empty tomb with all his foibles. The resurrection is for him.

And then we have Mary, beloved and faithful Mary Magdalene who takes herself to the tomb in the early morning and thus becomes the first evangelist of the resurrection, bringing the news to the disciples. Mary who even in the midst of seeing the empty tomb is overcome with grief and fear and loss. Mary who cannot stop crying, even when Jesus is standing in front of her. Mary who doesn't even recognize her risen Lord initially. Mary

who is full of faith and full of uncertainty, full of hope and full of grief, who boldly tells the story of the empty tomb, but still fears that Jesus' body has just been taken away, Mary the paradox of all our Easter morning feelings. The resurrection is for her.

Each of us as we find ourselves here this morning. Maybe some of us have that twinge of John, bold and assured that this message is true, real, and vibrant. Maybe with a hint of pride that we were here first, the first ones to hear the message with the rising of the sun. The resurrection is for us. Maybe some of us have Peter's worry and hesitancy, wondering if all that we have done up to this point will negate us from the promise that seems to be standing in front of us. Maybe there's that fear that while we trust this is true, we aren't sure it will be for us because we've made too many mistakes. The resurrection is for us. And maybe some of us feel the push and pull of Mary, joy and fear, sorrow and relief, uncertainty and faith. We see the empty tomb, we see Jesus, and yet we aren't 100% positive this incomprehensible thing is happening. The resurrection is for us.

However you find yourselves this morning, the resurrection is for you. Whether you are fleet of foot or a little slower. Whether you are boldly assured or quietly questioning. Whether you are joyful but also grieving. Whether you're indifferent. The resurrection is for you. It doesn't matter

what brings us here, how we are brought here, whether we look like we just rolled out of bed a few minutes ago or feel ready to take on the day, God is here for you, Jesus is risen for you, the Spirit is blowing through the trees for you. As we come to this baptismal font to remember the promises brought to us this morning, we remember that all of this is for us. God doesn't care what we look like, what we're wrestling with, God is simply happy your heart is here, and here in this place you will be reminded that God has claimed you as a beloved child, a part of the kingdom of God, a part of the resurrection. If you gotta put a Speedo on your head to feel it, go for it. God's just glad you're here. **AMEN!!!**