

Remember when you were a kid and summer seemed endless

Or waiting for Christmas seemed like an eternity

Yet now time rolls by in a flash

That meshes well with the immediate gratification desires of our society

We live in a fast paced world where things come quickly

And when they don't, we are easily frustrated by the delay

Yet that is strangely at odds with the predominant Christian/Evangelical teaching

Where the focus is on eternity and what will happen in the end—when we cross over

Many teach that the Sermon on the Mount really speaks of the perfection of eternity

The purpose of salvation is to spend eternity with God—Oh but, yes, it's good now too

Etc...

But that is strangely dissatisfying and jarring when we are caught in those endless waiting places...

Waiting in the hospital as a loved one teeters on the brink of death

While hunting for the elusive job

Waiting for results of tests—whether medical or a board certification

Getting the bad news that I didn't make it and have to reapply

Etc...

The platitudes that are given only make it worse...

He's in a better place now

God had another purpose for her

What lessons is God trying to teach you?

Someday in the by and by, you will all be together again

You suffer now, but there is a brilliant future with Jesus where there is no suffering

We could create a long list...

This is where we find Martha and Mary... in John 11:17, reading through verse 27

If only you had come sooner, Lazarus would still be alive

Martha isn't at all comforted by Jesus response that he will rise again

She doesn't want to see him in heaven someday

She is grieving for him now

Jesus says, *"I am the resurrection and the life."*

Not, I will be the resurrection and the life—someday at the end of time...

Not even I will be resurrected at the end of my life—my death on the cross...

I am the resurrection and the life right now

I am present and I have come to be with you today—I am crying with you

Don't wait for the future—pay attention to the here and now

It is the invitation to find Jesus in the midst of the hard times

To persist in finding the Present Jesus—the Present Teacher—the Spirit

It doesn't matter what name you are familiar with

You are not alone—there is spiritual accompaniment present—look for it

Then Listen together for the resurrection and life

Jesus said to her, "Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."

There is life and hope beyond the immediate place in which we find ourselves

Hope is trusting God in the broken places—that God can transform even the worst

Hope is now—not in some future by and by
Nor is hope that it will all turn out ok
Hope says I can look the worst of the worst in the face and God will make something of it

Salvation is not about the future of living with Jesus in heaven some day when all troubles are gone
Salvation is about living now

It is about intimacy with God—trusting God in the moment
It is not a “second chance at getting it right”

Salvation is simply to love and trust God in the here and now
Walking everyday in conversation with the living God
Letting the God “I AM” be fully present to us as we are fully present to our lives
It is knowing that every part of our life—the good and the absolutely awful—
That God is fully present with us and at work in the midst of it all

But salvation is beyond us—God works through us to the rest of humanity
It isn't just a personal thing—God and me together
God's justice and grace is at work through us to transform our broken world
We gather in community, trusting God to be enough as we Listen for hope
We seek to know how it is that we are to be present to the brokenness around us
Yet bring the Presence of God into this place where we find ourselves

Every act of justice and kindness is an act of transforming grace—changing our world
Every place we are Led to enact the goodness of God in the face of injustice
Every place we live out the truth of our purpose on earth changes things
Every place that we thwart the powers that be by living out the Kingdom of God
Every place that we refuse the mantra that we are inadequate and impotent
Living into the truth that we are enough to do what is ours to do
Every one of those places is an act of faithful transformation empowered by God

God comes all the way to us and brings us life and resurrection power
Whether it be an illness that leads to death or a hard time in our lives
Whether it be in finding a missing puzzle piece or finding way forward in a dilemma
The One who is the resurrection and life is fully present to us wherever we find ourselves
We are never left alone or without a next step

None of the eternal stuff matters if it doesn't matter now—and Jesus says it matters now!

Jesus brought heaven to earth—*"Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. "*
It means we can live every mundane and ordinary moment in the Eternal Now
All resources, all power, and the fullness of God is available to us

Not only is the fullness of God present to us
But God has called us to be reconcilers with God—transforming our broken world
The Holy Spirit/Living Christ is at work through us to refigure the broken world and its people
To the very purposes for which they were created and brought into being
That which was lost is being restored to them as they return to their intended purpose

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and life."—Now!