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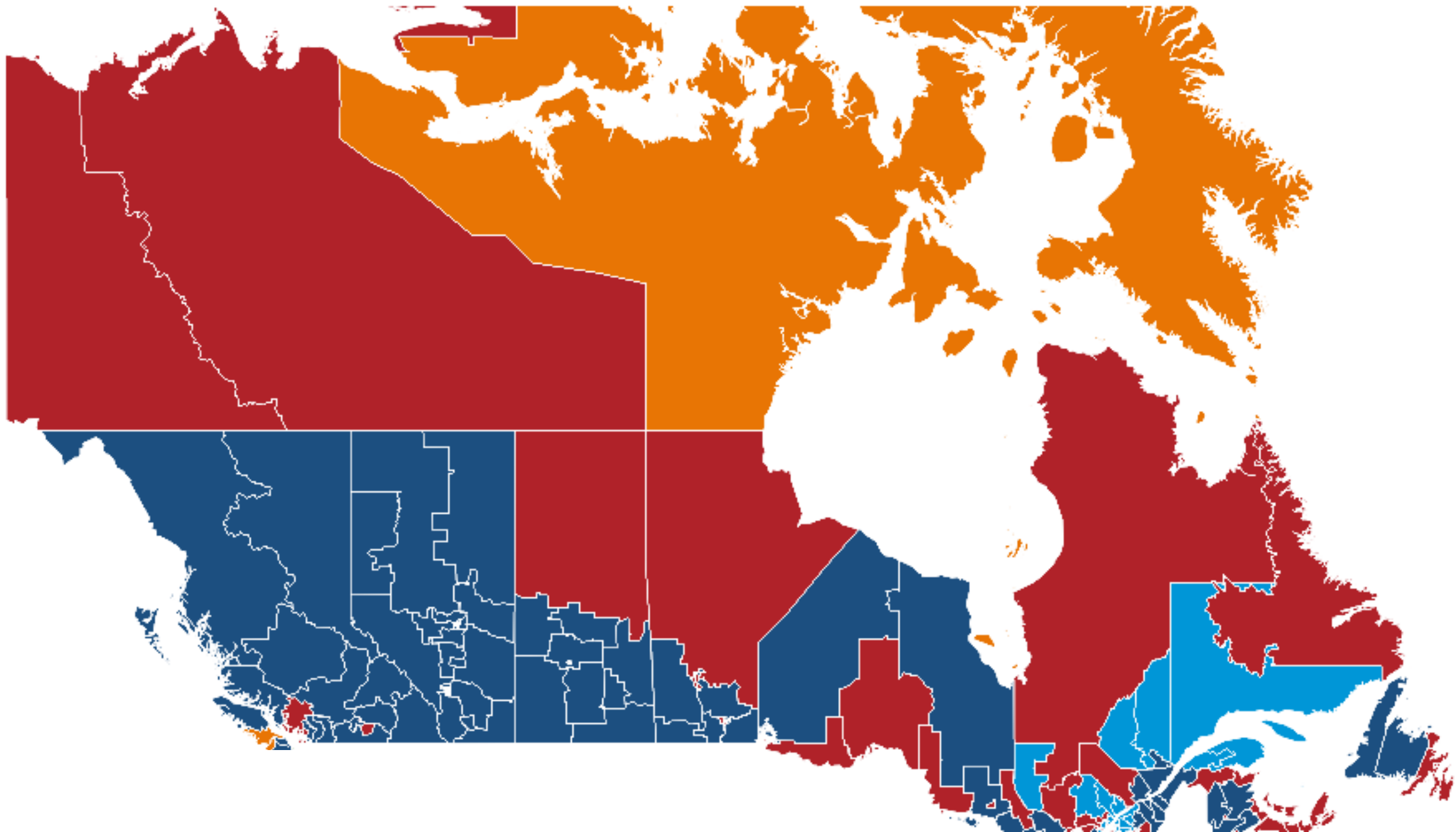
Dwelling in Easter:

Healing and Purification from  
the Forces of Death

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# **The question before us:**

How does the Easter story of Jesus' death and resurrection continue to define our story today?



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## **Stark terms:**

- the most consequential election in Canadian history
- crucial in determining the fate of the country
- different than most elections of recent memory

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# The Gospel of Mark: Political Manifesto?

- Good news (Gospel) of change
- Messiah Jesus as Political Leader bringing A New Kingdom
- Minister to those in need
- Call ministers (*diakonia*) to serve with him
- Political Campaigning – John the Baptist, Disciples
- Political Suppression (arrest of John the Baptist)
- Stories from the Campaign Trail

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# The Holy Spirit

- Jesus is “the Holy One of God” – bringing God’s power to *change* and *transform* into spaces of deep need.

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# Campaign of Healing and Purification

- In Jesus' life and through the encounters he had with people in need
- Continued ministry through his death and resurrection

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# A Ministry of Healing

- Healing from various forms of disease, sickness, illness (physical, mental, etc.)
- Healing from relational dysfunction or problems
- At times we struggle to know what healing should look like (acceptance of limits, prayer for transformation, etc.).



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# A Ministry of Purification

- Purification can be a difficult concept
- Often used to talk about “moral” purity – actions that we can call “pure” or “honorable” and those we name as “sinful.”
- “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Ps. 51:10)
- “Purity” language has been abused
- The Bible has other uses of the terms “purity,” “purification,” “clean,” and “unclean” that are not connected with “moral” purity, moral failure, or sin.

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# Ritual Purity or being Ritually Unclean

- 3 Major Sources of Ritual Impurity: genital discharges of blood or semen, *lepra* (skin diseases), corpses
- Not necessarily a moral judgment to do with Sin or moral failure.
- A way of maintaining the distinction between the profane (space outside the tabernacle/temple) and the sacred space of God's dwelling.
- A way of protecting God's people and God's dwelling

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# What was impurity all about?

- Mortality, birth and death
- God, on the other hand, is immortal, without birth or death.
- A way to keep “the forces of death” out of the sacred space of the temple

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# Jesus & The Forces of Death

- Forces of Death remained – ritual purity systems were still seen as necessary
- Forces of Death were seen to exert influence beyond bodily functions
- Unclean Spirits – plagued humanity, kept them from well-being and from entering sacred space.

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# Jesus on the Campaign Trail

- A key dimension to Jesus' mission in the Gospel of Mark is to Purify and Heal.
- Jesus against the Unclean Spirits/Demons
- A difficult topic for us in our own day, one that we are rightly cautious about when it comes to illness!

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# **Jesus as God's Holy One – A “Mobile Force of God's Holiness”**

“The Jesus of the Gospels is the holy one of God, a man who embodies a contagious power or force that is opposed to and ultimately destroys the powers that create impurity and death.”

– Matthew Thiessen, *Jesus and the Forces of Death*

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# **Jesus as God's Holy One – A “Mobile Force of God's Holiness”**

- Jesus didn't reject the ritual purity system
- Jesus is God's Messiah who deals with the forces of death that necessitate the ritual purity system.

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# Jesus on the Campaign Trail

## Healing and Purifying

- The man with the unclean spirit (Mark 1)
- Simon's Mother-in-Law (Mark 1)
- The Leper (Mark 1)
- The Paralytic (Mark 2)
- The man with a withered hand (Mark 3)
- The man with unclean spirit living among the tombs (Mark 5)
- The woman suffering from hemorrhages (Mark 5)
- Jairus' twelve-year-old daughter (Mark 5)
- The Syrophoenician woman's daughter (Mark 7)



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# **Jesus' death: Political Failure or the Power of God?**

- Jesus' death was the climax of the clash between God and the forces of death
- In the resurrection, God's Holy power healed and purified Jesus
- Through Jesus, all of reality was beginning to be healed and purified through power of the resurrection.

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# **The Task of the Disciples: Continue on the Campaign Trail (Mobile forces of Holiness)**

- The disciples were to live into the new world of God's in-breaking kingdom that Jesus had brought in his ministry of life overcoming death
- Carry on Jesus' mission of healing and purification in every new age, addressing in ever-new contexts the forces of death that attempt to drag God's good world down.