

# Easter Sunday

## April 12, 2020

**Our Savior's Way Lutheran Church**

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Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! These are the words we say every Easter, and yet for some reason, this year everything is different but no less important for us to hear.

Our text for this Easter comes to us from Matthew chapter 28, verses 1-10. St. Matthew tells us about The Resurrection of Jesus and how the women went to the tomb after He had been crucified. This was after the Sabbath day which began at sunset on Friday and lasted until sunset on Saturday. The women had watched Jesus die on the cross, and they were there when His body was placed in the tomb. They saw the large stone being rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb. It must've seemed to them that their whole world had been turned upside down...and while the other synoptic Gospels tell us that the women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body, our Gospel for today tells us, that the women simply went to look at the tomb. Could it be that Matthew was underscoring their feelings of abandonment and isolation in their time of grief?

Maybe you've been feeling a little isolated and disconnected. Dressing up and coming to church on Easter has always been a blessing but maybe you're not feeling the same this Easter. Quite honestly, if it weren't for the Stay at Home Order and the threat of the Coronavirus, most likely together, we'd be enjoying our typical Easter worship services both in the prayer garden and in our sanctuary. But things are very different this year, just as they were very different for the women on the first Easter morning. And as they made their way to the tomb, there was a violent earthquake. Any earthquake is unsettling but what came next was even more unsettling...

According to our Gospel, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, went to the tomb and rolled back that large stone that covered the entrance to the tomb. Then, after rolling back the stone, the angel sat on top of it. His appearance was white as lightning and his clothes were white as snow. Now those who had been guarding the tomb were so frightened and shaken, they

were unable to move and became motionless like the corpses in the tombs around them. It was a different day on that first Easter morning....

Then, the angel of the Lord said to the women don't be afraid. To the women who had seen and experienced the trauma of the earthquake, the angel, the stone no longer covering the tomb, and how the guards were unable to move, this must not have made sense. Do not be afraid? I can only imagine what must've gone through their minds. And yet, these are the same words that we hear today with all that is going on around us. You don't have to become so shaken or filled with fear that you become a lifeless corpse. Instead, hear the message that is being given to you and take to heart that Jesus, who was once crucified, is no longer here; He is risen, just as He said! The one who had been crucified for you, on your behalf, has also risen from the dead! Death couldn't hold Him! In Him, you have eternal life. And even though you might be fearful at first, you can be filled with joy and shout: Christ is Risen, He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

After that reassurance by the angel, the angel said to the women, ***“Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you...”*** (v.6b) The tomb was empty on that first Easter morning. Jesus was not captive to death and He wasn't in the tomb. The women again saw with their very eyes, like the way we see new life around us in the abundance of flowers this time of year. Death and despair are replaced with joy and hope for tomorrow. His is the victory. And while our faith might waver from time to time, by grace through faith, because of His death and resurrection, we can look forward to the day when we will see Him face to face!

Having seen and believed with their own eyes, the women hurried away from the tomb. While they were most likely still a little afraid, now they were filled with joy. They were on their way to tell the disciples the Good News and they were met by Jesus. He knew right where they were all along. He reassured them of His presence and out of their deep and sincere reverence for Him, they bowed down and worshiped Him at his feet. It's always rewarding for us as believers when Jesus reveals Himself to us. When He reveals Himself to us as we read and meditate on His Word. When He speaks into our heart, mind, and soul, as we worship and praise Him. He connects with us as we live out our baptism. And He comes to us again this morning, because He is the Lord of Life, who gives us Hope, enabling us to leave the

tomb. And, as we make our way through life, we are able to worship and praise Him. He enables us to say: Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Now Jesus Himself tells the women, “**...Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, there they will see me.**”(v.10) And this is what they did. No longer consumed by fear, they moved forward to sharing everything they saw and experienced. Yet, so often, this is where many believers are fearful. Fearful concerning this unusual story with others. They hesitate to tell about someone who lived, died, and returned to life after three days. This is our faith, this is our hope, based on eyewitnesses who were bold enough to share the Good News that Jesus lives! And He encourages us all to move forward sharing the Good News not just on Easter but always. It doesn't matter what has happened in the past. It doesn't matter what has been said or left unsaid. It doesn't matter where you may or may not have been. Jesus died and rose again that all of us might have New Life in Him!

He tells all of us that His disciples will see Him in Galilee, a city that stood at the entrance to the Gentile Nations. Jesus doesn't abandon His disciples nor forsaken them. He didn't abandon the women along the way. He reassures us and goes before us, to be the Good News for all Nations. And while those who oppose Him, simply do NOT want this message shared, yet in these troubling times, this is the very message that needs to be shared: Because of His Resurrection - Jesus is victorious over death and the grave. He brings us New Life. He reassures us and gives us Hope. For all this, we can say: Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Sermon Notes: Easter Sunday

1. According to Matthew's Gospel, the women:
  - a. went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body.
  - b. went to see the tomb.
  - c. went to see the angel.
  - d. went to see the guards.
  
2. The women were eyewitnesses to:
  - a. Jesus' crucifixion.
  - b. Jesus' entombment.
  - c. Jesus' empty tomb.
  - d. Jesus' life before and after the Resurrection.
  - e. a and b.
  - f. all of the above.
  
3. The women were told not to be afraid. They might have been afraid because:
  - a. they experienced a second earthquake within 3 days.
  - b. they saw the angel of the Lord in person.
  - c. they saw how afraid the guards had become.
  - d. they saw that the large stone had been rolled away.
  - e. b and c.
  - f. all of the above.
  - g. none of the above.
  
4. The women began to have hope when:
  - a. they saw that the stone had been rolled away.
  - b. they heard what the angel of the Lord said to them.
  - c. they saw that the tomb was empty.
  - d. Jesus met them along the way.
  - e. a and b.
  - f. b and c.
  - g. all of the above.

5. Even though we cannot come together during this pandemic, I can still share the joy that Jesus has given to me by: