

**The Resurrection of Our Lord, April 21, 2019**

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**Finding the Unexpected, Just as He Said**[Luke 24:1–12](#)

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

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From the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, chapter twenty-four, verses 5 through 8: AS [THE WOMEN] WERE FRIGHTENED AND BOWED THEIR FACES TO THE GROUND, THE MEN [IN CLOTHES DAZZLING LIKE LIGHTNING] SAID TO THEM, “WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING ONE AMONG THE DEAD? HE ISN’T HERE, BUT HE HAS RISEN. REMEMER HOW HE TOLD YOU WHILE HE WAS STILL IN GALILEE THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SON OF MAN TO BE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF SINFUL MEN AND BE CRUCIFIED AND ON THE THIRD DAY RISE.” AND THEY REMEMBERED HIS WORDS (vv 5–8).

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No one was expecting this. An empty tomb. A risen body. An appearance by angels. The women certainly didn’t expect this when they went to the tomb in the deep darkness on the first day of the new week. The eleven disciples and those who stayed home didn’t expect this either. Even when they heard about it, they found it hard to believe. They couldn’t comprehend what they were being told.

What did they expect?

The women expected to find the tomb sealed. Instead, the stone had been rolled away. They expected to find the dead body of Jesus, cold and rigid, a dead body in desperate need of spices to slow decay and mask the stench. The body wasn’t there. No stench, no decay, no death. Their spices were useless. Everything was different than they expected. They couldn’t figure it out. They’d seen His body laid in that very tomb before sunset on Friday. But now the tomb was empty. It was perplexing. The disciples were equally confused. When the women came back chattering about angels and resurrection, it seemed to them an idle tale. Mere talk. Nonsense. They found it unbelievable.

No one was thinking about resurrection on the first Easter. No one was hoping that Jesus would be alive. No one even imagined that it was possible. It was way beyond their dreams, hopes, and imagination.

And, really, how could they have expected the resurrection?

Sure, Jesus had brought dead people back to life before: Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, his friend Lazarus after lying in a tomb for four days. But none of them had been crucified. They had died, but they hadn't been intentionally, purposefully, maliciously, horribly put to death by the hands of other men. And even though their lives were restored, they weren't yet free from sin, sickness, or death. It was back to the old life, the dying life for them. So no one *could've* expected what happened with Jesus.

He was the first person ever to experience full resurrection to eternal, undying life. He WILL NEVER DIE AGAIN; DEATH NO LONGER HAS DOMINION OVER HIM (Rom 6:9). This was totally new. It had never happened before. He is THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP (1 Cor 15:20). And when there are firstfruits, there's a promise of more to follow.

The women came expecting the sickly, rotten fruit of death. In its place, they found a new fruit, as fresh and sweet as heaven. One that had never been seen before. It had fallen from the unlikeliest of trees, the cross, and been planted in the most unfriendly soil, a tomb. But where Jesus had been planted dead and lifeless, there He arose. There life arose. The life of the endless world to come, of a NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH in which THE FORMER THINGS—such as sin, sickness, and sorrow—SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED (Is 65:17).

And just what did you expect to find at church this morning?

If you came expecting to find a nice Easter breakfast, then you certainly weren't disappointed. If you came for the feel of spring, the fragrance of flowers, and the sounds of a heavenly choir, your senses are being richly rewarded. If you came to see familiar faces and old friends, know that we're thrilled to see you, too. If you came because it's what you always do on Easter, because it's your tradition, maybe to please mom and dad or out of a sense of nostalgia, longing for something you had in the past, welcome back.

And maybe you came looking for something deeper, something more significant. Answers to questions. Answers to prayers. Something to stop the pain and sadness. Something to hold onto. Meaning, purpose, hope, a community, God. Maybe, like so many in our time, you're not quite sure what you're looking for.

Well, I have good news for all of you: the women that morning didn't find what they were looking for. They found what they weren't looking for, and it was way, way better.

AS the women WERE FRIGHTENED AND BOWED THEIR FACES TO THE GROUND, two angels in dazzling clothes like lightning SAID TO THEM, “WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING ONE AMONG THE DEAD? HE ISN’T HERE, BUT HE HAS RISEN. REMEMBER HOW HE TOLD YOU WHILE HE WAS STILL IN GALILEE THAT IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE SON OF MAN TO BE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF SINFUL MEN AND BE CRUCIFIED AND ON THE THIRD DAY RISE.” AND THEY REMEMBERED HIS WORDS

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Friends, death is no longer the last word; it has lost its sting. The power of sin is broken. The devil’s reign of terror is over. Our Redeemer lives. AS BY A MAN CAME DEATH, BY A MAN HAS COME ALSO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, SO ALSO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE (1 Cor 15:21–22).

Jesus lives.

Jesus lives, and your sins are forgiven.

Jesus lives, and your hope has a firm foundation.

Jesus lives, and you shall live too.

Jesus lives, and everything He said is trustworthy and true.

Long before Holy Week, He said that He would SUFFER MANY THINGS AND BE REJECTED BY THE ELDERS AND CHIEF PRIESTS AND SCRIBES, AND BE KILLED, AND ON THE THIRD DAY BE RAISED (Lk 9:22).

And it happened just as He said. It happened according to the plan and will of God. God let all this happen to Jesus—the suffering, the rejection, the death—so that He could make Easter happen for you. Sin and Satan did their worst to our Lord, and then God reversed all of it. On the third day, He raised Him from the dead. Death gives way to life. Sin is forgiven. The devil’s tongue is tied.

Easter morning changed everything for those women.

THEY REMEMBERED HIS WORDS (v 8).

They believed His words.

They TOLD ALL THESE THINGS TO THE ELEVEN AND TO ALL THE REST because they couldn’t keep quiet about the LIVING ONE (v 9).

Whatever you expected to find, this is far better than your dreams, hopes, and imagination. And it's real. The resurrection of Jesus really happened. Jesus really does live and reigns. And we don't even know the half of it yet!

What we do know is this: He can be trusted. We can take Him at His word. Everything happens just as He says. His suffering. His death. His resurrection. Your forgiveness. Your life in Him. And, yes, your resurrection. Because He's not done with you yet, and He's not done with your life, and He's not even done when we draw our last breath, when the monitor goes flat, when the casket is closed, or when the grass grows over our graves. Of this we can be sure: our God is at work, still at work in our lives and in our deaths, working for our good even when everything suggests otherwise.

And already you have a new life with Jesus.

It began in your baptism. DO YOU NOT KNOW THAT ALL OF US WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? WE WERE BURIED WITH HIM BY BAPTISM INTO DEATH, IN ORDER THAT JUST AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, WE TOO MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE (Rom 6:3–4)

This new life is fed by this Holy Communion. THE CUP OF BLESSING THAT WE BLESS, IS IT NOT A PARTICIPATION IN THE BLOOD OF the risen CHRIST? THE BREAD THAT WE BREAK, IS IT NOT A PARTICIPATION IN THE BODY OF the risen CHRIST (1 Cor 10:16)?

Jesus lives. He is not far away. He is right here. Here in His Word, in His promises, just as He said, not only on Easter but every single Sunday.

And now we are waiting for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH IN WHICH RIGHTEOUSNESS DWELLS (2 Pet 3:13), for the day when we will see Him FACE TO FACE (1 Cor 13:12), for every tear to be wiped away for good, for graves to be split open, for the dead to rise, for the end of all mourning and crying and pain, for the former things to pass away (Rev 21:4), for the joyful day when the countless host streams in through gates of pearl, and we who are in Christ WILL ALWAYS BE together and WITH THE risen LORD (1 Th 5:17).

That's something you can expect, just as He said, just as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. Remember His words and what He's done, and declare them to others.

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