

The Resurrection of Our Lord, April 20, AD 2025

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Waking Up

Luke 24:1–12

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, AT EARLY DAWN, [THE WOMEN] WENT TO THE TOMB, TAKING THE SPICES THEY HAD PREPARED. (v 1)

It's like waking up from a deep sleep, maybe on a morning when the alarm never buzzed or following a long afternoon nap or like that time you fell asleep on vacation and then woke up so disoriented. You're groggy, confused, out of it. The sunlight streams through the window at an unexpected angle. The world looks and sounds different than it should. You don't know where you are. You can't make sense of what time it is. You're not quite sure what's happening. For a moment, you feel dislocated, undone, like reality is completely different than what you'd always believed and your brain tries to catch up but can't quite get there. You struggle to make sense of the world, but the facts just don't add up.

That's what it's like for the women who go to Jesus' TOMB AT EARLY DAWN ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK with their spices. Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Joanna wake that Sunday morning bleary-eyed and confused. No, it hadn't been a late night. And it isn't just because it's early. Their minds are clouded. They can't understand what they're seeing and hearing. None of it makes sense. Why, they'd seen WHERE HE WAS LAID just the night before last, only now nothing's where it should be and He isn't there, and what in the world is going on?

It's the same for the apostles. The women come babbling about THE STONE having been ROLLED AWAY but not finding THE BODY OF THE LORD JESUS and, oh, there were TWO MEN IN DAZZLING APPAREL—How to describe them? (You had to be there!)—and WHY SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD. Someone is RISEN, whatever that means. Don't you REMEMBER HOW HE TOLD YOU, but we'd forgotten and it didn't make any sense at the time. He had to BE DELIVERED INTO THE HANDS OF SINFUL MEN and BE CRUCIFIED and now it's the THIRD DAY and don't you know what that means? And the apostles don't know what it means. THE WORDS SEEMED TO THEM TO BE AN IDLE TALE, AND THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE THEM.

But PETER ROSE AND RAN TO THE TOMB to see for himself; STOOPING AND LOOKING IN—fearful but curious—HE sees THE LINEN CLOTHS BY THEMSELVES—which is weird, because they should’ve been wrapped around a dead body—AND HE goes HOME MARVELING AT WHAT HAD HAPPENED but not actually knowing what that was. Like waking up from a dream, except the dream made more sense than the waking. The plain fact is that Jesus died, and they can’t really wrap their minds around the truth that there’s something after death. They believe it, in theory, but they’d never really grasped what comes next because it all seemed so final—the thorns, the nails, the cross, the stone. But now everything’s turned on its head, and what does it all mean? Groggy, confused, out of it.

But not Jesus. That’s not what it was like for our Lord. He didn’t wake up wondering where He was or what had happened or where the time had gone. God the Father gave Him a little nudge, and He simply sat up in the tomb, stretched once or twice, and rubbed the crusties out of His eyes. Then He swung His legs over the side, stood up, and walked out into life. Into life! Like all the flogging and spitting and mocking, like all the sin and sadness and death, as if the serpent and the garden and the shame and everything the children of Adam and Eve had gone through in the years since had been a long, terrible nightmare, but now was over. Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Jesus didn’t live to die. That’s the way we think of it. We think: First you’re born, then you die, and in between you do some stuff. But that’s all backwards. Jesus died to live. He got death out of the way. For all of us. He treated it like a nap. And then He simply got up and went on into life as it was always intended to be. He walked right out of the tomb with the old scars but as a new man. MADE ALIVE BY THE SPIRIT (1 Peter 3:18). Wholly and truly alive in a way that we can only begin to dream about . . . except that He promised WHOEVER BELIEVES HAS ETERNAL LIFE already right now, even if you’re just waking up to it and can’t quite make sense of it and it feels all wrong because all the old stuff clings to you like a burr on your shoes (John 6:47). But what’s actually wrong is the old life of sin and death, the selfishness that absorbs us, the fear and hiding. Sure, that stuff’s real, in a way, but it’s not more real than Jesus.

Jesus stood up and said, “BEHOLD, I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, AND THE FORMER THINGS SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED OR COME INTO MIND. They won’t bother you anymore, and you can forget about all of it—forget about your sin, forget about your shame, forget about your hurt, forget about your sickness. Fuhgeddaboudit! I’m taking care of all that for you. BUT BE GLAD AND REJOICE FOREVER IN THAT WHICH I CREATE. FOR BEHOLD, I CREATE

JERUSALEM TO BE A JOY, AND HER PEOPLE TO BE A GLADNESS, and My own risen body is the living proof” (Isaiah 65:17–18).

ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE! CHRIST IS THE FIRSTFRUITS, THEN AT HIS COMING THOSE WHO BELONG TO CHRIST (1 Corinthians 15:22b–23)—that’s us! First, already right now, for the soul, and soon for our bodies as well! BELOVED, WE ARE GOD’S CHILDREN NOW, AND WHAT WE WILL BE HAS NOT YET fully APPEARED; BUT WE KNOW THAT WHEN HE APPEARS again WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, BECAUSE WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS (1 John 3:2). That’s the Gospel truth right there. He’s alive, and He’s WITH us ALWAYS TO THE END OF THE AGE (Matthew 28:20), and He’s coming again.

Friends, we’ve spent too much time acting like death is after us. It’s not death that’s after us. It’s life! Why else did He rise from the dead except to come back for you? He didn’t do it for Himself. He did it for you. And He’s holding out those scarred hands for you, and He’s saying, “Look what I did *for you!*” Why else did He give us His word and Holy Baptism and this precious gift of His living and life-giving body and blood? He did it to give us His life.

And here we are and we’ve been wasting our lives and living in unreality, acting like it’s really real and treating all the Jesus stuff like its fiction or science fiction or a romance, like it’s a fun story but that’s all it is. We’ve been trying to cover up the smell of sin and death in our own way. We’ve been trying to hide it and bury it and pretend like it doesn’t exist, when the fact is that Jesus already has that covered. I’m telling you, the women couldn’t have made this stuff up. And the apostles might not have believed it at first, but they didn’t have a better explanation. There’s only one way the pieces fit together. Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Wake up! It’s time to wake up! Your Lord lives. It’s His voice that you hear—cutting through the nightmares and bad dreams and sorrows. You may be struggling to make sense of it. You may only half-believe. Maybe you’ve stepped inside of this church—or any church—for the first time in an age and an age. Jesus doesn’t care how long its been. He’s just glad for your sake that it’s today. “My life for yours He says.” And He means it.

So what does it look like to live awake and alive, or at least waking up and starting to be alive? WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT (2 Corinthians 5:7). It means believing what we know to be true and living what we know to be true whether we feel it or not. We were made to be alive not only on Easter Sunday but every day. Alive to Jesus our brother, alive by the Holy Spirit, alive as children of the heavenly Father. Alive and

awake. So open your eyes. Really open them. Look at the people around you—in your home, in your work, in your community. See them as if for the first time. See them through Jesus' eyes. See them like you've just woken up and walked out of the tomb. See them through the lens of love and mercy and forgiveness and peace. See all the color of the world, from the red of His blood to the white of His glorious resurrection.

This is no dream, and it's only just the beginning.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
