**Exodus 15:1-11** Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying,   
“I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. **2**  The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him. **3** The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name. **4**  “Pharaoh’s chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea. **5** The floods covered them; they went down into the depths like a stone. **6**  Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. **7** In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries; you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble. **8** At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up; the floods stood up in a heap; the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea. **9** The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.’ **10** You blew with your wind; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters. **11**  “Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

**1 Corinthians 5:6-8** Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7** Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. **8** Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

**John 20:1-18** Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. **2** So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” **3**  So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. **4** Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, **7** and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9** for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples went back to their homes. **11** But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. **12** And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. **13** They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” **14** Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15** Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” **16** Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). **17** Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” **18** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

**“Tears to Joy”**

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Grace and peace to you in the crucified and risen king of glory Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Savior. Amen. Very rarely when the Christian Church celebrates Easter, does it also line with April 1st or April Fool’s Day. Most enjoy a lighthearted prank, but these things can get out of hand. For instance, on April 1, 1905 news hit Europe about a massive crime against the U.S. Federal Treasury. Supposedly thieves tunneled beneath the Treasury and stole hundreds of millions of dollars. As explained,

“The U.S. Government was said to be desperately trying to conceal the crime, even as its forces chased the criminals across the oceans of the world… Some newspapers even created illustrations to show the exact location of the tunnel dug by the thieves. When word reached America, most U.S. newspapers were bemused by the gullibility of their European counterparts. However, there were a few calls for a congressional investigation of the crime.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Easter has more integrity than falling prey to April Fool’s Day fake news. We know that the resurrection of Jesus Christ had verification from multiple sources. First, a testimony arose from the adversaries of Jesus who feared His empty tomb. Second, a testimony came from the disciples who followed Jesus. Third, a testimony came directly from the Lord who revealed Himself to be alive. Finally, the testimony of Old Testament Scripture confirmed it all. Now Mary Magdalene figured the body of Jesus stolen and that meant loneliness. Our reason cannot justify what only the grace of God can give. The triumph of Jesus over the grave is to turn tears into joy.

1. **There were plenty of tears for Mary Magdalene.**
2. She went to the tomb not alone.

* Those dedicated women at the cross came together early on Sunday because they loved Jesus.
* Mary was part of this group, but the Gospel of John gives special witness to Mary.
* While the other women entered the tomb, all we hear about Mary is how, “she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple…”
* Cutting herself off from the others left fear, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”
* Fears over life can make us react in ways that separate us from other Christians.
* Rather than drawing closer together, trembling hearts makes go off in our own ways.
* Mary caused her own loneliness and so can we, which leaves no good answers.

1. Peter and John went to the tomb and Mary also again.

* These men inspected the circumstances seeing the burial clothes lying there along with the neatly folded face cloth.
* John notes how he saw and believed the signs of resurrection, but both did not understand what the Scriptures had promised.
* In a matter a fact way, these disciples simply left going back to their homes.
* They did not love their neighbor as themselves, because Mary was alone outside the tomb weeping.
* Our reaction like the disciples can be at first to care, but soon it fizzles out.
* Where there is little faith in Christ’s victory, so love overlooks the distress of others.
* Has Easter become more about returning home from church than being the church that cares?

1. Mary was alone.

* An empty tomb was disturbing to one who loved Christ as she looked into it with tears.
* To angels she said, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”
* Even when Jesus stood before her grief only saw a garden saying, “tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”
* Tears need more comfort than an empty tomb can give.
* Death confronts us that even angels cannot overcome.
* Loss can make us blind even when Christ is right there before us.

1. **There was plenty of joy for Mary Magdalene.**
2. Two angels in the tomb knew there were no more tears.

* They came as a pair to bear a good witness to one that was alone.
* More than burial clothes and a face cloth, they sat at the head and feat of where Jesus lay declaring Him the Holy One.
* His death was not meaningless or just a sad martyrdom, but truly a sacrifice perfectly made for a sinful world.
* The question asked by the angels really gave the answer, “Woman, why are you weeping?”
* Christ cast out seven demons from Mary, but His cross took hold of all evil in life.
* Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:31-32).
* Subjection to the demons and darkness has been undone by Christ and His victory upon your life by baptism has made you holy in Him.

1. Jesus standing before Mary turned her away from tears.

* His first question confirmed the angels, but His second question offered a way out of the distress asking, “Whom are you seeking?”
* She was seeking a dead Jesus, but it was the risen Jesus who came with love to seek her out.
* In the hype to do something, the gardener turned into being the Good Shepherd calling His sheep by name saying, “Mary.”
* Where men failed to love, she recognized the love of Jesus calling Him, “Rabonni” which is more than teacher, but my lord and master.
* Christians are to assure one another that Christ does wipe away the tears, since He died never to die again.
* There is no guilt so sad that cannot hear a Word of forgiveness or death so grim leaving Christ without the last say.
* Easter is Christ caring for His Church so as it is “for you” each by Word and Sacrament, we now cannot overlook being the church that cares.

1. Mary knew what to tell the disciples without tears.

* She was the first to see the risen Christ, but still clung to Him.
* Yet, His resurrection was nothing like Lazarus or the widow at Nain’s son in the past.
* The former way of life with Him was no more, His death and resurrection achieved a greater glory.
* Jesus sent Mary back to share, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”
* Whatever separation there was between God and man is no longer, because Christ stands in-between as the mediator.
* Everything Jesus has in relationship to the Father by right now belongs to us by grace treating us equally as His brothers and sisters.

The message of Easter comes from the living Jesus who turns tears to joy. Even if today is April Fool’s Day, there is nothing foolish about the crucified and risen Jesus. He has paid for the price of our sins. He has risen promising redemption is secure. St. Paul proclaims, “Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” There are two ways to handle Easter. Either it is the most ridiculous event in history or it is the most wonderful promise for any in a sinful world. Amen. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

1. http://hoaxes.org/aprilfool/P30 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)