**Matthew 28:1-10 (ESV)**

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. **2** And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. **3**  His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. **4** And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. **5** But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. **6** He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” **8** So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. **9** And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. **10** Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

**“The King Raised”**

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Allelulia! In the Name of Jesus our crucified and risen King of glory. Amen. Easter is the other side of the coin to Good Friday. You cannot have one without the other or they both would be worthless. The cross and empty tomb are inseparable no less than the same Jesus who remains forever as both God and man. St. Paul tells us that the Lord Jesus, “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Likewise, Christ the Savior openly said, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again” (John 10:17-18).

Every king has a legacy. The Old Testament gives examples of both good and bad kings. Plenty of kingdoms have risen and fallen since the time of Easter. Yet, these legacies have nothing left to say or give. What Christ did after death had more value for He marched upon hell itself. He preached that a true king arose out of the cross. Sin was forgiven by His atoning sacrifice. Death no longer had the last word. Even the Devil lost his power to accuse. The legacy of Christ is more than history, but an everlasting victory for humanity in Him. St. Paul said, “For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” The crucified king is the king risen with good news to come, see, and tell of His kingdom that has no end.

Who is it that comes to the tomb of this king? The strong and secure were already present guarding the tomb. Those coming were the weak and weary who saw Jesus’ die. Every step by the women to the tomb must have been painstaking. Plus, the guards watching at distance were only a sign of more humiliation. In this unbreakable tension, an angel descended to announce what God had done. He rolled back the stone and it put the strong and secure in their place. The guards fell to the ground like dead men at what they saw, which is the end of unbelief. Yet, to the broken and emptied women what they saw was to give pure comfort by faith. The angel preached from the rock words of hope saying, “Do not be afraid, for I know you seek Jesus who was crucified.”

There are many reasons for coming to an Easter service at church. It could be part of the holiday tradition, a way to keep peace in the family, or looking for an experience. What God seeks to give is far greater good news by His promising Word. An Early Church Fathers says it well, “Pray, brothers, that the angel would descend now and roll away all the hardness of our hearts and open up our closed senses and declare to our minds that Christ has risen, for just as the heart in which Christ lives and reigns is heaven, so also the heart in which Christ remains dead and buried is a grave” (ACC). The Lord comes to preach to the crushed and lowly. Pride denies what He gives, but emptied sinners receive His word of forgiveness. There is nothing to fear for mercy abounds from Christ. He is the risen king who conquered all sin, death, and the Devil for you by His cross.

So, what is there to see at an empty tomb? The answer is not much. Where eyes failed, ears were filled with more important words. “Jesus is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.” The angel did not ask them to choose Jesus or let their will get in the way. He just stated a fact and let the good news stand for what it was. The angel does not even glorify his own words. Praise went to what Jesus already said to them about His rising on the third day. His Word was life as He promised, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24). The women were to tell the disciples about more than an empty tomb, but the Word of life was Jesus. Even the angel confirmed it all saying, “See, I have told you.”

On this Easter Sunday the most cosmic event in creation shine for us men and our salvation. More than saying, “God’s not dead.” We can say God did die, but has risen from the dead never to die again. There is no need to be silent over an empty tomb. Logically people have to face that the guards had vested interest in keeping the tomb secured. We must consider the first witnesses to an empty tomb were women and that was no 1st-century complement. The myth of the resurrection needs to find Jesus’ body, which those at that time had far more to lose if they could not. Yet, an empty tomb is still silent without the saving Word for sinners. The Gospel is not about winning an argument, but God’s answer of life for all. Even our unbelief and doubt is to hear St. Paul says, “we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Why did they have a need to tell? The women came and saw, but when they went away. It was more with a mixture of fear and joy. Their glorious “going to tell” was not so picture perfect. Yet, the glorious picture was never based on any of them. As the angel pointed out, “Behold, Jesus is going before you.” This perfect Jesus who died, but lives in just one word set the tone for speaking His good news. He appeared telling them, “Greetings!” It can also be translated, “Rejoice! or Be glad!” Their response was to come and worship Him. No one was asking if, “Heaven is for real?” The answer was “Jesus is for real.” His body even had the marks of victory from the cross as they held on to His glorified feet. This perfect picture sent them on their way with perfect words, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Christ goes ahead of His Church because He is the king raised. He knows our mixture of joy and fear, especially in a culture that increasingly hates Easter. Unless, it is about a bunny, chocolate, jelly beans, or some eggs. By Word and Sacrament Jesus comes to greet us often with the marks of His death and resurrection. The sting of sin has lost to forgiveness won by Him. The power of death is disarmed by Him who died but lives. Even the Devil has no authority because Jesus rules by His cross. His victory joyfully overcomes our fears, so the witness is to tell others that Jesus calls them brothers. He is not waiting for someone to ask or looking for a sign of goodness on their part. It does not even mean the picture will turn out perfect as we see it. St. Paul tells us the hidden victory that stands forever for us, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Christ’s resurrection proves more than heaven being real, but God really suffered, died and rose for us. What matters is Him for He reigns perfectly now as Lord and Savior. As one person notes, “…Scripture reveals very little of what “heaven” is like, and (more importantly), “heaven” is not the great hope and promise of the Christian message at all!  Rather, the return of Christ in glory is the time when God’s good work, begun in us, will come to completion (Phil 1:6), and the creation itself will be set free from decay into the glorious freedom bestowed on God’s children (Romans 8).”[[1]](#footnote-1) Easter lets us know the worth of Good Friday. The Holy precious blood and innocent suffering death of God’s Son saves. The crucified king is the king risen with good news to come, see, and tell of His kingdom that has no end. Amen. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia. Amen.

1. http://concordiatheology.org/2011/05/heaven-is-for-real/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)