

Things are not going to be the same again. Since 2020 you see this, you think this, you live this. So be it. You are Christian. Your Lord is risen.

Things are not going to be the same again. When you hear the words, “will you marry me?” And hopefully you hear the answer, “Yes.” Without hesitation. Or, “Honey, we’re having a baby.” Things never the same. “I have a new job”, “I have a surprise for you.” ...or, the phone call, “We’re at the hospital” or “There’s been an accident.” When the doctor says, “I’m concerned about this” or “I’m sorry, it’s cancer.” Or “There’s nothing we can do.” Your whole life changed. You can still hear the words. Some for good, others for worse, but things are different, never the same again, your lives re-oriented, new schedules, you’ve different cares, priorities. The things that may troubled you one day are gone (they seem so petty now). Of all the things you’ve heard, there’s no more world-changing; never the same again, your life-changing than: **You Lord lives.**

It’s not hard to imagine how those women felt, we’ve all taken that walk. Mourned the death of loved ones. Jesus’ burial was rushed, not the dignity He deserved. God’s people, considered it the highest act of love one person could do for another, to provide an honorable burial. They come to the tomb, earliest possible moment to take care of the unfortunate act of washing the body of Jesus.

Things are not going to be the same. The women heard. **The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be killed, after three days he will rise.** Heard Him say that **I am the resurrection and the life** when He raised Lazarus just days before. Yet they look for Him in a grave! Brought burial spices. Still trembled with astonishment. We are so like the women on the way to the tomb; we live by our present reality, by sight, not by His Words.

Things are not going to be the same again. Be honest, we all have things we’re afraid of these days. Everyone. Some more than others, but we’re all afraid. Or have you not thought of living without your loved one or seen the news or gone to the store.

So be it if we have to struggle more or can’t eat meat everyday. Learn some history. Scripture. God’s people have suffered, endured tyrannies, evil governments, plagues, persecutions throughout history; some still do in parts of the world. Their sufferings are difficult for us to imagine. We are soft. God has been gentle to us. Despite the evil works of man, God sustained and blessed His people. He did it in wars, in prisons, while they were starving or being tortured, even as they lost their homes or family, amid plagues that caused every family to bury several members. He worked all things for their good. He will do no less for us.

So don’t be scared of what could happen in your future. Do not worship your earthly life here by being afraid of what may happen. You are Christian. Your Lord.

Things are not going to be the same again. That’s exactly what’s taking place when Mary. Jesus says **Woman, why are you weeping?** He answered, to her astonishment, only by speaking her name. **Mary.** The sheep hear the Shepherd’s voice, He calls each by name. She answered, now with tears of joy. Jesus says

abruptly, best translated, **Do not go on clinging to me.** Even Mary, first witness of the risen Lord, things are not the same again, He will soon be glorified in heaven but there is no going back to the good old days before the horrors of Good Friday. After His resurrection, things are never the same again. Even greater.

Yet we are so like the disciples. They're hiding in fear, of Pilate, the guards, the mob, what Caiaphas would do to them. We see: a culture, government, social media, world, all becoming evermore hostile to Christian truth. We act scared, distrusting our Lord provisions, how people might treat us or think of us. Martin Luther under penalty of death, wrote a Psalm on the wall of His study, **I will not die but live and recount the works of the Lord.** Speak the truth in love. Why do we fear what man can do to us? You are Christian. Your Lord lives. How can we despair, lose sight of His promises, after all you've been taught and heard?

Things are not going to be the same again. Pursue good health, see all the doctors, eat healthy, but you can't avoid it. Our cemeteries continue to fill up. We are in the valley of the shadow of death. Death is always close. We are all mourning. Mourning someone you love. Mourning the pending death of someone you love. You fear what might happen to you, even your own death.

Things are not going to be the same again, when you have to carry on without someone you love. Your Lord lives! St. Paul tells you **don't you dare mourn as the world mourns.** Your loved one lives.

Things are not the same again. **I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die.** I always say to those on their deathbed, "I will see you again." That's not a promise I can keep. It is a promise our risen Lord keeps. Your Lord lives -you will never die. Your Lord lives -there is no such thing as -the end.

Bask in the beautiful reality of this day as heaven and earth come together in this place, at this altar as no other way on earth. You're still celebrating Easter with your loved ones, joining your song to theirs before His throne.

Our loved ones are more alive now in heaven with our Lord than they ever were here. I can't wait to embrace my grandmother, father again, so many loved ones we've buried here. To embrace (*pointing to people*) *your grandma, your spouse, your father, your mother, your son.* You will hear their voice, feel their embrace for eternity. A blessed reunion awaits.

Until then, things are not the same again. Amid the emptiness, false security, lies and confusion of this world; in the face of your sin and death, your own share of frustration and pain comes this glorious Easter gospel, Jesus the Christ, true man, true God, crucified, dead for your offenses, is raised for you -to be justified, given His peace, given His life.

Whatever the future holds, whatever you're afraid of, the answer the same. Your Lord lives. You are His. Be Christian. Live like it, struggle like it. He will provide. This is the day the Lord has made. You are not the same again. Rejoice in it. His Word, His promises, His love for you endures forever. And so do you. Der Herr ist auferstanden. The Lord is risen!