

**Sermon for the Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day March 31, 2024 jj**  
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There was a sermon at the cemetery. And the women weren't ready for it. They went to Jesus' tomb, which was the one that Joseph had purchased and had prepared for several members of his family to be buried in when they died. That's why the Evangelists make a point to say no one had been buried in this multiplex tomb, yet. Several spots were carved out of the rock ready to receive the dead bodies. And Jesus' crucified body was the first to be laid there during the early evening of Good Friday.

The women were going there because the process was not yet done. They wanted to pay their last respects. They had spices and perfumes to apply and complete the heart-wrenching job that they had to do. They expected to see the dead and buried and sealed-in corpse of Jesus—they were going to the correct place because they had followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how Jesus was laid in it.

However, early in the morning at this burial place, there was something unexpected. The Lord was not sealed in behind the stone at the door of the tomb! It had been rolled away! The women looked in and they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, as St. Luke reports.

Now they are in panic mode! The terror of it all! What has happened? Their stricken hearts are in no condition to hear a sermon at the cemetery. Was the body looted by robbers? Could the thieves be still hiding out in the cave ready to harm us and take the expensive goods we are carrying? Has the Body itself been stolen, defiled, destroyed? Jesus had been so hated by His enemies... maybe they have added further insult to their injury against their beloved Lord.

Wild animals? How could they have done it? And where are the guards that the Priests and

Pharisees ordered to stand there? Did the disciples pull off a faked resurrection after all? After all of them deserting Jesus and running away, could they possibly have gotten their composure, organized a grand conspiracy and dare to take away Jesus' body in a matter of hours, all on a Holy Sabbath? If they did all that, why? What would that have gained for them? No one would believe them.

Try to imagine what these women were facing all of a sudden at the instant following this discovery. What would you think? You would automatically think the worst too! Sick to your stomach. Mind and heart would be racing a mile a minute. What in the world could have happened?

As if the bloody, brutal beatings and the horrible suffocating hanging weren't bad enough, now they have this absolute nightmare on steroids. Looking at it from every angle, they talked and they wondered. As they conjectured, speculated, guessed—during that time, however long it was, a sermon was about to be preached at the cemetery.

And who were the preachers? All of a sudden, out of nowhere, two powerfully stunning preachers show up—sent straight from heaven. Two men, clothed in gleaming, dazzling white vestments appear in the tomb.

They're not there just for the women to stare at them, they don't call attention to themselves like eye-candy! Certainly they are not there to attract any worship. The women fear them, they won't look. They fall flat on their faces.

They don't need to look at them! These are preachers, sent from heaven. Faith comes by hearing. They have a sermon to preach. The resurrection news is not going to be a still small

voice creeping up from within the human psyche. This is no faint wish to give a false hope in the sinner's heart. There is a real sermon at the cemetery. A Word spoken from the Lord, from the outside, a sermon meant for the women and for you this morning.

The Lord's Words are to be heard at the cemetery. Not the women's wondering conjectures, not even their emotions that we may try to identify with. Rejoice this Easter in God's Word.

Why do you look for the living among the dead? Did you catch that? The living! And the sermon continues: He—hmm, I wonder who He refers to?—He is not here.

No kidding! Yes, magnificent preachers in the tomb, We see that. The tomb is empty. The cross has nobody on it, too. That fact by itself isn't a complete sermon. No comfort comes by the Holy Spirit if you just stop there. We remain perplexed and in doubt.

Then let the preachers finish their sermon at the cemetery! The angels told the women: He is not here, He is Risen! Christ is risen—He is risen indeed!

Risen? How can that be? Here's how ladies, and anyone else listening to the Gospel sermon at the cemetery: Don't you remember your Lord's own words? Recall His preaching! He told you many times when you were listening to His sermons in Galilee—all of this would happen to Him. It HAD to happen. This is what Jesus said and the angels quote Him, they repost the sermon to use today's Internet language:

The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised to life again.

That was the sermon at the cemetery. The angels did their messenger job. The Lord's

Word was preached from inside the tomb. The precious gift of faith that comes from hearing this sermon was delivered. Put in the ears of this tiny church of women, and the Holy Spirit granted them faith to believe and remember. The Lord's Word was mightily at work here at the church in the cemetery. The women remembered the Lord's words from before.

Notice that all of their wondering, guessing, worrying, conjecturing, all their talking to themselves, did nothing for them! It only made their hearts tremble more with unbelief. It only focused them more on their lack, on how all is lost, on how can it get any worse! It's very similar in your experience too, I'd imagine. The more you focus on yourself, and whatever concerns and worries you, the worse it can feel inside you.

But for these women, it took a sermon, a Word from the Lord, a Word given them not from within, but from outside them. A Word of life preached in the unlikely location of a cemetery, a place of death. But that Word preached from the outside was what planted faith in these renewed believers' hearts. Now they finally trust what Jesus Himself said He would do for them and for their salvation.

This External Word, this Word from the outside that was spoken at the cemetery near Calvary, is demonstrated with great power each time when that same Word is joined together with water in Baptism.

In Baptism we have yet another external Word of God that promises each of us and promises you the Holy Spirit, so faith will continue to cling to that Word of the Crucified and Risen Christ. What a wonderful thing to rejoice in on this holy day, as well as on, say, the anniversary date of your baptism, too. Your sins are forgiven and you have the certainty of eternal life in the name of Jesus.

Like the women at the tomb—now that they have heard this sermon at the cemetery, received this faith-bestowing and life-giving External Word, and now they trust in what they have heard. Also they cannot keep this good news to themselves! Off they go—to tell the Eleven disciples, including Peter, and other believers the truth of this sermon at the cemetery. They now proclaim: Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!

Over and over again they repeat the news of Jesus resurrected from the grave. The “all things” of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection, the empty tomb and the angels’ sermon at the cemetery, now come together in a grand message of salvation.

Sadly, the others did not believe the women. Their words seemed to them like nonsense. Those women were delirious! Their say-so cannot be reliable. They are just wondering, conjecturing, guessing. But Luke reminds us that Peter did not take a chance. He rose right away and ran to the tomb. John chimes in and said he ran with him, even running ahead of Peter. But it’s Peter who took the first look inside. He saw the linen strips lying by themselves.

If only Peter would have recalled that as a Baby, Jesus was wrapped in strips of cloth—swaddling clothes, those are a sign of His Messiah status. But now all Peter had seen were used burial cloths. Those were the only markers that his Lord had risen from the dead. He marvels, he’s astounded. But he went away wondering to himself what had happened.

Peter also needed a bigger dose of preaching. He needed something like that sermon at the cemetery. And He would get it. He would hear that sermon a little later on that day, preached from the mouth of the resurrected Lord Himself.

He had been very crucified, now also is very risen, then the Savior ate an everyday meal of broiled fish and preached a sermon that finally opened Peter’s mind to understand the Old Testament. This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.

You get this same preaching of the Word that makes you a believer. Jesus proclaims His forgiveness and eternal life to you Sunday after Sunday through a preacher of the Word whom He has sent to you. For 30 years and counting Christ Our Savior congregation has received the external Word of the Gospel and it is all for you: It is true! Jesus has risen from the dead, just as He promised! He appeared to Peter and the ten other apostles as well as hundreds more. Even the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus. He did it for you. Death has been defeated. It has no power over you.

Yet there’s more! The living voice of the crucified but risen Jesus will speak in just a few moments. Those same powerful Words that instituted the Lord’s Supper on Maundy Thursday will be preached again. Instead of a cemetery, you will hear this sermon at a table. The meal will be pronounced by our Savior Jesus Christ who says: This is My Body. This is My Blood. Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

This forgiveness is forever. It will stick with you, no matter what you face. What is given to you today in the Sacrament of the Altar will see you through your own grave to the resurrection of your body and your life everlasting.

Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! For you and for your salvation. You will not be able to keep this to yourself, so you, too, will have a chance to proclaim this sermon at the cemetery. St. Paul assures you, “as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death”—the Lord’s death for you—

until He comes, that is, when He comes on the  
Last Day.

Have a Blessed Easter!

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and  
of the Holy Spirit. Amen.