

What were the women expecting to find when they went that Easter morning to the tomb? Because they had heard the words of Jesus time and time again. No less than three times he had told them that he would be crucified, that he would be buried, and that he would rise again on the third day. They should have known that Jesus was telling the truth. They had seen him do these miraculous things so many times before. But they went to the tomb expecting things to be, well, just like yesterday and the day before, just like things had always been. They were expecting things to just be the same. And so they went to that tomb, expecting to find the body of Jesus. But instead of finding a body, they found an angel. Instead of finding the silence of the tomb, they found a message of great hope. And instead of finding things the same as they had always been, they found that their lives would never be the same again. Because the message that the angel brought to them that day was a message unlike any before. "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." Things would never be the same again for those women, because something had happened, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, that would change their lives forever.

And Christians, I ask you this Easter morning, what is it that you have expected to find here? Because honestly, we've heard the message of the resurrection so many times that, well, it seems to be just the same old thing, something that has gone on the same as it always has, and it's just a part of our everyday lives. And for that reason, we can often overlook it and overlook what this message actually means for our lives. Because Jesus being alive is not just an ordinary thing, Christians. This is a world changing, life changing event. And the message that the angel brought to the women that morning is the same message that he brings to you today. He is risen! He is not in the tomb. He is in heaven forever, reigning as the King of all things. Jesus Christ is alive! Your Redeemer is alive! And because of that, our world and our lives have been changed forever.

Because think about the things that we struggle with, Christians, and think about what that means in light of Christ being alive. Perhaps we are struggling in these days with fear, fear of an uncertain future, fear of disease, fear of who knows what? It could be anything. But we are fearful and afraid, unsure of what tomorrow will bring. But Jesus is alive, dear Christians! And because he is alive, we don't have to be afraid. We don't have to wonder what's going to happen tomorrow, because frankly, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Nothing can take us away from him. We belong to Him forever. And for that reason, whatever we might fear in this life, we need not fear, because Jesus lives forever.

And maybe we're struggling with uncertainty, the uncertainty of a world which has been turned upside down. I mean, just look around you. I can't ever remember having an Easter service quite like this. Everything has been turned upside down. We're not really sure what tomorrow will bring. But Jesus is alive, dear Christians! And because Jesus lives, we have a certainty beyond anything in this life. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, unchanging, forever, so that whatever this world might throw at us, it doesn't matter, because we have Jesus, and we know what the end will be. Jesus lives, dear Christians, forever as the unchanging king of all creation.

And maybe we are struggling with, well, sin and the effects of sin, the sin which has separated us from God, the sin which has wrecked our lives. But Jesus lives, dear Christians! And because Jesus lives, we have been made a new creation, set free from sin, set free from the things which have held us down in bondage. We belong to him, and our lives have been changed forever, so that we walk in holiness and newness of life as Jesus's own, forever. Jesus lives, and you have been forgiven, because he is alive.

And dear Christians, in all of these things, perhaps the one that may concern us the most is the reality of death, the death which is coming as the wages of sin, the death which we cannot avoid. But Jesus is alive, dear Christians! He is victorious over the grave! And because he lives, you also will live in Him. Because He is alive, death no longer has power over us. It has become the doorway to everlasting life, the doorway to heaven forever. Jesus has conquered, and because he has been resurrected, we shall be resurrected with him too, so that all the death has taken away will be taken away from death when Jesus comes to destroy death on the last day. Yes, dear Christians, our Lord being alive changes everything. Our lives will never be the same again.

So cling to him! Cling to your Lord who is alive this day! Cling to your Lord who has come forth from the grave. Because your Redeemer lives, you can face tomorrow. Because your Redeemer lives, you have been forgiven. Because your Redeemer lives, you too shall live with Him forever.

Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus Christ is the firstborn of the dead! To him be power and glory forever. Amen.