

Easter Luke
April 17, 2022

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Happy Easter!

Today we are gathered here to celebrate that the tomb is empty, and the tomb is empty because Jesus was raised from the dead.

The tomb wasn't empty because Jesus' body was stolen. The tomb was empty, because Jesus stood up and walked out of it. Jesus walked out of the tomb! Resurrected on the third day – just as he said he would.

But very few followers actually believed it would happen, or they heard it and just couldn't understand how it could be. Perhaps they thought Jesus was the one telling idle tales.

But, the women go to the tomb bright and early that first Easter morning to anoint Jesus' body, only to see that the tomb is empty. Jesus is not there, but angels were. And just like in the beginning of Jesus' story in Luke, angels are there to proclaim the good news. This time it is that Jesus is not in the tomb. He has been risen!

He came. He saw. He conquered sin and death, the tomb is empty, and Jesus is on the move!

If you remember back to Christmas and the scene in the manger, Jesus was wrapped in strips of cloth – strips of cloth used to bury the dead. At his birth, Jesus was already proclaiming the good news – new life wrapped up in the bands of death. Life in the midst of death.

The womb and the tomb, the tomb and the womb; they are eternally connected to Jesus. Life and death, death and life. This is the good news of the resurrection - death is passing and life is eternal.

And because God loves us and our sins are forgiven, we are eternally connected to God through baptism, the source of all life, the one who resurrects, and absolutely nothing can separate us from God's life giving love. It is ours eternally.

Eternally we are connected to God. That's what we celebrate in Baptism. In our baptism, we are joined to Jesus' death and resurrection forever.

And so, when the angels ask the women, "Why are you seeking the living among the dead?" That question is pointed at us as well. Why are you seeking the living among the dead?

How often are we wasting our time looking for doom and gloom, when there is actually life radiating all around us. How often do we assume the worst, when the best is right here? Why do we tend to seek the living among the dead?

On that first Easter, when the women heard that question, Jesus was probably already over at Lazarus, Mary, and Martha's house enjoying breakfast.

You'll remember that Lazarus' sister Mary was the one who anointed Jesus' feet with nard from Lazarus' burial a weeks ago in order to prepare Jesus for his burial. She is NOT one of the Maries among the women who show up on Easter morning at the tomb. Neither is her sister Martha, who is probably busy scrambling eggs and cleaning the house, nor her brother Lazarus who himself was already raised from the dead.

They were not looking for the living among the dead. They were likely just waiting for Jesus to show up. But, the other women were looking for Jesus, and those who seek Jesus will be rewarded with the amazing news of life in the midst of death.

And thank God these women were looking to serve Jesus in what they thought would be one last time. The men were just hanging about in a state of despair.

So, after hearing this amazing news, these women run to tell the disciples what they learned! They had to share the good news. The tomb is empty! Jesus is risen from the dead!

And you'd think the disciples would jump up and rejoice in this good news, but the women are completely dismissed. The men thought – it's just an idle tale. An idle tale?

I think using the word "idle" is really interesting here. Idle – it's not going anywhere – it's got no legs – it's dead. But the good news definitely has legs and is alive as Jesus stands up and walks out of the tomb! And as the women run to share the good news.

The good news is not idle. It's alive and on the move and coming to a neighborhood near you! Jesus is alive and on the move proclaiming forgiveness and restoring relationships. The Gospel most definitely has legs and is fully alive, and today those legs are your legs, that life is your life.

The good news is on the move, because it cannot be idle – it has to be shared for the well-being of the entire world. It has to be shared everywhere! And because of that, disciples cannot be idle.

We are sent to take the good news of God's unconditional unending love with us everywhere we go. We are to walk it and talk about it everywhere we are.

The good news is most definitely not idle. It's on the move and being sent to all who are in despair, to all who are hurting, to all who have been ostracized, to all who are filled with shame, and to those who live without hope.

God is not against us. God is for us! Always for us! We are to die for – and be resurrected for – and because of that it's not an idle tale, but good news that has to be delivered.

And that good news needs legs and life – your legs and your life. It's not just hanging out here; it's in the world when you're in the world!

So, this morning you are Peter. You've come. You've seen. And now – off you go! Well – in just a few minutes. We have to eat first.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Amen.