

CHRIST IS RISEN! *He is risen indeed.* The Easter story from Luke chapter 24.

**<sup>1</sup>On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup>While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup>"The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words.**

**<sup>9</sup>When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup>It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. <sup>12</sup>Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.**

Amen. That's it. There is nothing I can say-- there is nothing anyone can say that is more interesting than what I just read, and you already know it. You can learn something new every day, so it can be difficult to appreciate something that's not new, something you already know.

When I was a little boy, my mom would drop me and my brothers and sisters off at school in the morning. And my mom would say to us as we left the car, "Remember whose you are." She wanted us to know that Jesus redeemed us. But I could be a grumpy little kid sometimes so a few times I would say back to her, "I already know that, Mom!" Ooh. Not the right response. But my mom didn't say, it because I'd never heard that before. She said it so I would know it better; so I would remember.

Today I have no new information to share with you. When I say "Christ is risen" you don't say, "Really?" When I say, "CHRIST IS RISEN," you say "*He is risen indeed.*" If you've had grumpy days this past week, if you got bad news this past week, if you've been missing someone, you don't need new information. You need to know the truth of Christ's resurrection again, to know it better. So our goal in the next 15 minutes is to remember a truth we already know, Jesus is alive.

The women were the first people to find out that Christ is risen. They went to his tomb on Easter morning. Imagine yourself coming alongside those women on their walk. What would you say to them? You and I, of course, know how this ends, but the women did not know that. A week earlier they had seen their best friend enter the city like a king. But he was wrongly accused, convicted, beaten, executed and buried. As far

as they were concerned, that was the end of Jesus' story. They had hoped for so much from Jesus. They'd hoped he was the Messiah; the one God would send to save the world. They'd seen the miracles. They had heard him preach, but now he was dead. They weren't sure who he was. They weren't sure what to believe. And they missed their friend. So they mourned his death. They prepared spices to give his body the best possible treatment. On Sunday morning they got up early, probably because they weren't sleeping much. What do you think they looked like in the pre-dawn twilight? What do you think they talked about? What was in their minds?

What would you say to them? You could say, "The tomb is empty!" Well, even when they saw the empty tomb, they were confused. So maybe you would explain it to them. "Jesus is alive!" Would they believe you? Maybe you'd be subtler. "You won't be needing all those spices..."

We don't need to come up with anything to say to those women. The angels at the tomb had the perfect message for restoring Easter hope to their lives, and ours. They start with a question: "**Why do you look for the living among the dead?**" There is an obvious answer to that question. Because he died! These women knew what it's like to miss someone. And some of you know that too. So the angel gives them the comfort of Easter as simply as possible, "**He is not here. He has risen!**" Because Jesus is risen, that means that we will all rise someday. He is like the first fruit on an apple tree. If there's one apple, there will be more! If Jesus is risen, then there will be more resurrections. If Christ is risen, you will see again those people you miss most dearly. And the angels say, "**He has risen!**"

The most amazing part of the angel's message is that they didn't give the women any new information. He says, "**Remember how he told you... 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'**" If you only read this part of the story, the resurrection seems unheard of. But it wasn't. Jesus had told them exactly what would happen to him; they just forgot. So, here's a crazy thought: picture those women on the road to the tomb before dawn, they could have been skipping and jumping and overjoyed just like we would be—because Jesus told them how his story would end! They were distracted and confused by all the sad details in the middle of the story, so they forgot the ending. Their walk was needlessly gloomy until they remembered.

Listen, nobody in this room thinks that Jesus is dead. That's not the problem that confronts us daily. But that doesn't mean we don't have a whole lot in common with those women. Just like Jesus predicted his betrayal and suffering and death, he has predicted all the things that trouble us in the middle of our stories. He said, "**In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart. I have overcome the world.**" (John 16:33)

Maybe we don't have to imagine ourselves with those women on the road to the tomb. Maybe we are those women. Our road to the tomb looks a little different. Maybe you get started before sunrise every day because it feels like that's the only way you'll get everything done. Maybe your road to the tomb leads through hurt in your family. Maybe your road to the tomb leads through a clinic where the test results are in, and they're not good. Maybe you find yourself walking your road alone, missing the companionship of a person you loved more than you can say. Maybe it's not so hard to imagine being on the road with those women. When we are in the middle of dealing with all those sad details in the middle of our story, it is so easy to forget that Jesus has already told us how our story ends. Our story ends just like his.

So what if some new disciple showed up on the road with you. What would you need them to say to you? "Hey look on the bright side!"? Not good enough. "God's doing this for your good." That may be true, but it sure is hard to hear when you're in the middle of your story. But what if they didn't give you any new information? What if they just said, "Remember? Remember when Jesus said, **'Surely I am with you always?'**" (Matthew 28:19) "Remember when Jesus said, **'Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?'**" (Matthew 6:26) "Remember when Jesus said, **'I am the resurrection, and the life, whoever believes in me will never die.'**" (John 11:25).

Sometimes those seem like empty promises or Christian clichés, and they are if you've forgotten that Jesus is alive. If Christ is not risen our hope is hollow. If Christ is in a tomb, he is not with me in the hospital room. If Christ is dead, he cannot ensure that I'll be alright next month. If Christ is dead, he is not the resurrection and the life, and your eternal home is a casket. If Christ is dead, then he was a fraud. But if he is who he said he is, if he's alive... Friends, CHRIST IS RISEN. *He is risen indeed.* Today he wants us to remember it!

There's a great scene in the movie *The Lion King* when Simba, the prince lion, is all sad and aimless. And he looks up at the clouds one night and sees the face of his father, Mufasa. But Mufasa does not tell him some new information that he's never heard before. Mufasa says in James Earl Jones' rumbling bass voice, "Remember who you are. Remember!" Remembering made all the difference for Simba, it does for us too. But I like to think that my Mama is wiser than Mufasa because my Mama would say in her beautiful alto voice, "Remember whose you are!" You belong to, you are under the care of a Savior who died to wash away your sins, who rose to guarantee your place in heaven, and who lives again to be with you always.

I realize you already know that! But when you're in the middle of your story, on the road to a tomb, it sure helps to remember.

When those women remembered Jesus words, it changed their lives. Immediately they went to tell others. Every Christian in the Bible has the same reaction to Easter. They tell others about it. If the primary thing disciples do is remember what Jesus has done, the secondary thing disciples do is remind others what Jesus has done!

Now, this would be a great place for me to tell you to share the message of Easter with people who don't believe it. Go on a mission trip. Invite your co-worker to church. All that stuff. And that is a great application of the Easter story. But before the women did anything like that, they went to remind other disciples who had forgotten Jesus' words.

You don't have to imagine coming alongside the women on their way to the tomb, because you come alongside struggling Christians every single day. All around you are people who know the story of Easter but forget in the middle of very real struggles. We all forget. You know what this looks like. After your kid loses a game. When your spouse collapses in a chair and does the eye rub. When your dad celebrates his birthday in heaven, but your mom spends the day here on earth. In those situations, a hug, a listening ear, or some quality time go a long way. But please don't think you need to come up with some ingenious thing to say to them. You already know the good news that can change their day, and they know it too. So remind them!

Wouldn't it be great if we lived every day like it was Easter morning? Until we get to heaven, we'll keep getting distracted by the middle of our story. So every day get to know the Easter truth better. We do it by remembering the good news we already know. We do it by reminding others. CHRIST IS RISEN. *He is risen indeed.* Alleluia. Amen.