

Grace to you and peace ... from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

¹ Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" ⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

Text: Luke 24:1-12 A Easter 4/5/26 Exodus 15:1-11 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Psalm 98
Hymns: 733, 732, 200, 199

HE HAS RISEN!

I know that my Redeemer lives; what comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead; He lives my ever-living Head.

He lives triumphant from the grave, He lives eternally to save,
He lives all glorious in the sky, He lives exalted there on high. (TLH #200:1-2)

Dear fellow believers in our resurrected and living Savior, Jesus Christ,

How the women must have been filled with gloom as they set out for the grave early on that first Easter morning. Their Lord had been put to death. Now they were bringing spices with which to anoint Him. They fully expected to see the lifeless body of the One who was dearest to their hearts. But what was this?! As they approached the tomb, they could see that the huge stone, which had blocked its entrance, had been rolled away. And as they entered the tomb itself, they discovered that Jesus' body was no longer there! What could this mean?!

Suddenly, two men stood by them in dazzling white clothing. The Gospel of John tells us that these men were actually angels (Jn. 20:12). The women were terrified, but they need not have been. For just as God had sent an angel to announce His Son's birth, so He again had sent angels to announce His Son's resurrection. The angels gave the women the wonderful news: "*Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'*"

Hear the Good News of our Savior's resurrection! These last weeks we have been saddened as we directed our thoughts to our Savior's suffering and death, and our sins that made it all necessary. We have been saddened by the terrible physical and especially spiritual battle Jesus waged for our sakes. But now we can rejoice because Jesus has risen from the dead. Death could not keep Jesus, because Jesus is the Lord of life!

The fact of Jesus' bodily resurrection is the best news we could ever hear. Romans 4:25 tells us that Jesus "*was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification*" Jesus took all our sins upon Himself and died for them on the cross so that you and I don't have to die eternally in hell. Paul makes the point in 1 Corinthians, chapter fifteen, "*If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ*" (those who have died, believing in Christ) "*have perished*" (vv. 17-18). If Jesus had not risen from the dead, our sins wouldn't be forgiven and we couldn't go to heaven. But Jesus did rise from the dead! Therefore ALL of our sins have been forgiven, and we ARE going to heaven!

After the angels reminded the women of what Jesus had said to them about His death and resurrection, we're told, "*And they remembered His words.*" They believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Unfortunately, when the disciples first heard about it, they didn't believe it.

There are those who try to make something less of Jesus' resurrection than what it truly is. They claim that Jesus only lives on in our memory through the things He said and did. But they will not say that Jesus rose bodily from the dead, and is alive today. In the second chapter of Acts, however, Peter assures us, "*God raised up [Jesus], having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. ... He was not abandoned to the grave, nor did His body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact*" (vv. 24, 31-32).

When Thomas doubted that it was Jesus standing before him, risen bodily from death, Jesus let him touch the scars on His hands and side. Then Thomas exclaimed, "*My Lord and my God!*" (Jn. 20:28). Thomas saw and touched Jesus' physical body, and knew that Jesus had come back to life again.

Believe the good news of our Savior's resurrection! It's faith in the crucified and risen Christ that saves us. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (Jn. 3:16, my emphasis). Saving faith is not simply acknowledging the fact that Jesus Christ existed. Saving faith is believing that Jesus Christ alone is the Son of God and Savior of the world. Jesus says, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (Jn. 14:6). Saving faith causes us to sorrow over our sin, and place no trust in anything we do to save ourselves. Instead, saving faith leads us to humbly trust in Jesus who died on the cross and rose again to save us. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we don't have to be punished in hell for our sins. Because Jesus rose again from the dead, by faith in Him we, too, will rise from the dead and live with Him in heaven forever!

How can we have this faith? The women had their doubts, as you and I sometimes do. And where did the angels direct them? To God's Word. The angels reminded them of what Jesus had told them, that He would die, and that He would come back to life again three days later. When we have doubts about Jesus, where do we need to turn? To the Bible. We're told in Romans 10:17, "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*" As we hear what the Bible says about Jesus, the very words themselves are the power that removes our doubts and gives us confident faith. The Apostle Paul exclaimed, "*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*" (Ro. 1:17). As we hear what the Bible says about Jesus, God works the conviction in our hearts that Jesus has risen from the dead, and is alive forever!

The women heard the good news of Jesus' resurrection, believed it, and shared it. They couldn't wait to tell all of Jesus' followers that He was not dead, but that He had risen! They had felt lost, and filled with sadness. But now they were filled with joy!

That is the effect the Gospel has on people. At first Peter wasn't convinced that Jesus had risen. But Jesus soon appeared to him and the other disciples, and they knew that Jesus is alive. Later Jesus' enemies tried to keep Peter and John from spreading the Good News about Jesus. They refused, saying, "*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*" (Ac. 4:20). How can we keep it to ourselves that "*God is love*" (1 Jn. 4:8, 16); that "*while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Ro. 5:8)? We're going to share the Good News that we don't have to do anything to save ourselves, because Jesus saved us. We're going to share the Good News that Jesus rose from the dead, and has given us the victory over the devil and sin and hell and death.

Jesus Christ is not in the grave. **HE HAS RISEN!** Hear the Good News! Don't let the pleasures or troubles of life keep you from hearing this Good News often, to be comforted and strengthened by it. Once when Martin Luther was moping around, sad and depressed, his wife Katie put on a black mourning dress. When Luther asked her why, she told him that the way he had been acting, God must be dead. Luther got her point, and cheered up. He wrote on the wall of his study, "He lives! He lives!" It served as a daily reminder to Luther that no matter how bad things may be, our Savior lives and gives us peace and strength and joy.

Believe the Good News! With the eyes of faith see the empty tomb where Jesus lay. **HE HAS RISEN!** Because of Jesus we don't have to be afraid of the grave. Jesus already went to the grave, and returned to life. Jesus won't leave us in the grave. Paul assures us in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, "*We shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (vv. 51-53, my emphasis). **HE HAS RISEN!** You and I will also live with Jesus forever in heaven. He has told us, "*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand*" (Jn. 10:27-28). "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*" (Jn. 11:25-26a). We go from life here on earth, to eternal life with Jesus.*

HE HAS RISEN! Share the Good News! The message that Jesus lives saves us. **HE HAS RISEN!** Jesus lives and keeps our faith alive and strong, and gives us the confidence that all of our sins have been forgiven. **HE HAS RISEN!** *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”* (Ps. 23:6).

He lives and grants me daily breath; He lives and I shall conquer death;
He lives my mansion to prepare; He lives to bring me safely there.

He lives, all glory to His name! He lives, my Jesus, still the same.
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives, “I know that my Redeemer lives.” Amen.
(TLH #200:7-8)