

The title for today's message is: **Yes! He Lives, Jesus Has Risen.**

The Holy Angel said: ***He has risen! He is not here.***

Alleluia Christ Has Risen!

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Word of God through which, the Holy Spirit kindles Easter joy in our hearts, is the account of Jesus' resurrection recorded in Mark chapter 16.

Mark wrote: ***When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Suh-loh-mee bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.***

The next day, just after sunrise, the women went to anoint Jesus' body, all without thinking of who will roll away the stone of the tomb.

But, as they approached the tomb, they were surprised to see that the stone had already been rolled away.

And upon reaching the tomb they were again surprised when they saw a stranger sitting right, where Jesus had been laid to rest.

“Don't be alarmed, you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. 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.” The stranger said.

What's interesting is that the stranger mentioned Peter, apart from the other disciples. It was as if, Peter was given a personal invitation.

And maybe that was what Peter needed, he had just denied knowing Jesus three times, he would have been too ashamed, to stand before Jesus now

Or could this have been a way of telling Peter, that his sins have been forgiven, that there are still many things for him to do.

Now, I think it's the same way with Easter. We all have mixed feelings about Jesus' death, and resurrection. To be sure, Easter is an emotional event.

And its tempting to look back at the events of the Passion week, with our emotions disengaged.

But it isn't a good way to look at Easter. Look our faith in the risen Jesus, involves our hearts, minds and souls.

So, as we walk with these woman on the first Easter morning, I challenge you, to put yourself in the same frame of mind, as they were in. If you can.

Your Savior is dead. Your hopes, and dreams are shattered. You have nothing left, but to care for His body one last time before it decays.

But the grave is open. Jesus is not there. And a stranger sitting in the tomb says, the one your looking for is not here, He has risen.

You wonder, who is this stranger? and how could he have rolled away the large stone which blocked the entrance to the tomb, on his own.

Now, Mark tells us that: ***Bewilderment and fear overcome them.*** The women were wondering, what really happened to Jesus' body.

But soon they would come to realize that Jesus body wasn't there because Jesus has risen, Yes He lives.

That my friends, is the truth which rings in our hearts today, and every day. Jesus conquered death by His resurrection, death no longer has a hold on anyone.

Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, the same Jesus that was crucified, the same Jesus who died, is not dead, but is alive. Yes, Jesus has risen indeed.

Now, the stranger setting in the tomb, was actually an angel, who announces God's most important message, not to one of the disciples, but to three faithful women. **Yes! He lives. Jesus has risen.**

Therefore there's only one conclusion we can come to: that is, Jesus not only defeated death, but by doing so, He wiped away our sins.

Now, in order to understand this, we need to see the connection between death, and sin. Just as a bees stinger, makes it dangerous, and fearful.

Our sin gives death its power to hurt and destroy us. And on Good Friday we saw how deadly our sins are. We saw Jesus suffer, and die because of what we have done.

Just take a moment if you will, to reflect on your sins this past week. Your neglect of God's Word, or your laziness in prayer.

Your questioning God's promises, your doubts lead you to make choices that you think are best for you, instead of being focused on God's will for you.

Our sins, give death the power, to take us to hell, and to suffer God's anger for eternity. In His suffering, Jesus took the hellish punishment of our sins.

The blood of Jesus, washed away the stain of our sins, and His death took away all our sins.

You might say, he removed the stinger from the bee, by allowing the bee to sting Him, instead of us. With the stinger of sin gone, death is powerless.

And Jesus' resurrection from the dead shows us how powerless death is, now that Jesus gives life to those of us, who were once dead.

That's right my friends, God gave you and me, the victory through His only Son, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

In our first lesson, Isaiah said: ***And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever;***

Let this Good News resound in your hearts. It's not biased reporting; it's not government propaganda. It's simply, the truth.

God Himself tells us this good news. How? In His Word, through His holy messengers, and by many eye witness, who saw the risen Jesus.

His disciples touched Him, and talked to Him. **Yes! He lives! Jesus has risen.** He has conquered death, therefore we too, are conquerors.

Yet, so often I think, we fail to appreciate the great victory over death, that Jesus won for us all.

Our hearts fail to fire up with joy, at this great victory that is ours through faith, because we fail to realize what a great enemy, death is.

Today, we're insulated from death of all kinds. Years ago death was much more a part of daily life. Many men and women died at a younger age.

And often the viewing of the dead, was held in homes. However today, people usually die in nursing homes, or hospitals.

And, because funerals are celebrations of the dead persons life, it becomes easier for us to ignore the reality of death.

Yet, that doesn't change what death is. That doesn't change what a great victory Jesus won for us.

The more you, and I, can see the victory over death in Christ Jesus, the more we will see that, whatever problems we face, He can solve them for us.

On that first Easter, the three women were concerned about one big problem, how were they going to roll away the big heavy stone.

But, Jesus solved that problem, didn't He? So, I ask you, what stones need to be rolled away in your life.

Do you have problems at school, or with friends, or in relationships? Do you have family tensions, or financial difficulties?

Do you face health problems, or personal problems that make it hard for you to be joyful.

Whatever stone, or problem that's blocking your way to joyful living in Christ Jesus, has been removed through His resurrection.

Jesus can, and has taken care of our greatest problem, that is eternal death in hell, so He can certainly take care of all the other problems you and I face.

"But, how you might ask, what does Jesus' resurrection really have to do with my day to day problems?"

Well, I can certainly understand that question, because I too struggle at times with the same question. For example, I'm far-sighted.

And without my glasses, I can't see much of anything up close, and all too often I chose to look at my problems, without my glasses.

Therefore, sometimes I too, can't see how Jesus can help. Does that mean that Jesus has failed? Not at all!

That only means that I have failed to fully value all that my risen Savior has done for me.

Weather or not, you need glasses to see clearly, we all need to put on the glasses of God's Word.

We need to dig deeper into His Word. We need to regularly read and hear His Word, and we need to stay in touch with Him through prayer.

Then, as the Holy Spirit waters our faith through the Word, we will grow more and more to see how the risen Jesus truly is the answer to all our problems.

Think about how the risen Jesus is the answer to all our problems as we sing the hymn "I Know That My Redeemer Lives" at the close of the service.

It's a hymn that reminds us of the many ways our problems are solved because Jesus lives. Easter is the highpoint of our Christian life.

The festive music, and the cheerful news, stirs our emotions, and causes our hearts to jump and ring with joy.

Today, we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we don't have to wait until Easter to do so.

Because each Sunday, and each day, is a celebration of our Savior's resurrection. So keep the Easter Good News ringing in your hearts, and shining in your lives.

Amen.

Alleluia, Christ has risen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.