

## **Jesus show us resurrection power and love**

Acts 10:34-43; Luke 24:1-12; Colossians 3:1-4;  
Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18;

On this special day of the Christian year, what new information does Jesus want us to learn? As we celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection, what resurrection power and love can support us in this time of pandemic? Easter is the same every year. But each year also has its unique situation in our lives and is a special reminder to us of some important faith issues.

Our focus statement for today is: Show us, one more time, the extent of your power over death. Show us how you can help us turn our present circumstances, world situations, and our hearts into the miracles of new life. In a world that has made death more real – to everyone – and it is clearly an equal fear for rich and poor, more powerful and less powerful nations, and people of all races, languages and nationalities. What message does Jesus want us to take in today?

Jesus' entire public ministry was dedicated to showing his followers new ways of thinking and acting and believing, but even so, it seems nothing prepared them for his turning death into this new thing called resurrection! It's hard for us to imagine how confused and disheartened all of Jesus' disciples were. We get glimpses of this in the Easter stories but still, if we put ourselves into their shoes, I don't think we would be any more certain than they were during those days of death and resurrection.

Maybe we get a sense of what they were going through as we look at people's responses today to the Covid-19 virus. There is denial. There is fatalism. There is anger. There is resignation. There is fear. There is rebellion – I'm going to do what I want to do. There is ...you name it. Most of all, we are all probably unprepared for social / physical distancing and quarantine. Especially the extroverts among us. But even now – after a few weeks of being and feeling isolated, I suspect even introverts are uneasy.

Life has changed. We've been forced to alter plans. We have to adjust our schedules. With

Rose and I, physically distant from our children and grand children, we talk more on skype than we have ever before. But we sense we are hemmed in. What's the best help and comfort we can offer from a distance?

Maybe the scariest aspect of sticking to our homes is, we have to face ourselves more as we find new activities to be busy. And the temptation to not irritate a spouse or family member is increased. Our new normal makes us long for the old normal – as burdensome as it was at times. By now we long to just be bored with a duty as we talk face to face with a loved one. And we cannot be sure of what a new normal looks like after Covid-19 is under control. We live with a variety of uncertainties. We may need to over time, pick up new habits.

A few Monday's ago I received an update. Part of it reads: "Yesterday AM put on shirt and tie, lined up 2 chairs in pew formation & proceeded with worship for two. The first time since we have been living at Drake that both of us ever missed Sunday worship. Sometimes one of us had to miss because of sick children but never both of us. We sang some songs, used your message and musings. Thank you for those. All we missed was the pastoral prayer, offering and Wongs. We are keeping in contact with our children, our siblings and some on the Deacon list that we think may not use internet."

Good old habit. Using the phone more is a new required habit. Our lives have changed. In some ways like the lives of the first followers of Jesus did after resurrection Sunday. They didn't plan for a resurrection and the power it displayed! And despite being warned about it, they had to figure out what it meant – as they lived it! Just like you and I! We aren't watching a disaster movie – we are in it!

It's not unreasonable to ask, where is our Creator in all this? What is the Almighty trying to tell us? Does the coronavirus mark the beginning of the end of the world? Is this God's punishment on us? Is this a way creation is protesting how it's being treated? I am sure lots of people are trying to make sense of what is going on.

Maybe the biggest lesson of all is: we are stuck together. My carelessness, whatever the reason, may bring harm on you. Or my kindness – can show help and love, not just to another but to all, and sadly enough, possibly bring you harm.

Also, our economic model of interdependence and just in time delivery is under stress as we hope the next shipment of the drugs and food we use get here, from several provinces away or even other countries. Our lives have changed and I suspect will bring us a new normal.

We can all predict there will be fall out of various kinds for governments who have been competent or incompetent. Who have showed care for their citizens or haven't. And all will be judged by how well they cared for the most vulnerable in their population as well as people around the world. And of course the economy and the Canadian dream is threatened. Will workers be able to afford a house in the future? Can seniors retire? Will any of us be able to travel and eat out at restaurants – or will there even be local restaurants and airlines?

We probably are as confused and uncertain today as Jesus' disciples were. But if we have been listening to Jesus, and if we have been following Him, we have a better perspective. Why? Because we know the more complete story. We have been living out what Jesus came to teach us as faithfully as we know how.

We've been asking all the way through Lent, show us, Lord, your hiding place – the safe place with you; your faithful love and presence; your living water; your definition of blindness; your power over death; how to balance grief and celebration. And wow, has God ever shown us!

Jesus followers 2000 years ago, expected Jesus to do their wishes – bring a revolt and restore the Jewish kingdom. But when it did not occur, they thought his plan to bring in a new kingdom had been a horrible failure. But then resurrection occurred. Plus more teaching about the power, love and expectations of an Almighty God. And understanding that Jesus' resurrection was a stamp of approval by a God that is interested in

giving people new hearts – hearts and habits and attitudes of love.

All those lessons they just dimly understood. It took time for the first disciples to grasp more fully what Jesus was about. But we have the longer view. We have history behind us. We have no excuse to not know at least a little bit of what Jesus resurrection power and love is all about. And we have history before us, so how do we be faithful witnesses in the days to come?

One of the blessings of following the lectionary is that it puts scriptures together that we might not normally pick. For example our story of Peter and Cornelius, doesn't really go with Jesus' resurrection. Or does it?

This is one of those pivotal New Testament stories that changed the life of the early church. Jesus reached out to non Jews more than once. For example Lisa reminded us of the Samaritan woman at the well event. The woman fits almost every category of a marginalized person in society back then and unfortunately in many places today. A foreigner, a woman, and most likely a poor woman who didn't have much control over her life and choices. But Jesus offers her his most powerful message – living water - himself. Jesus broke into the habit that we have of marginalizing people.

And it happens again – with Peter & Cornelius. A clear message in a vision and through an angel, that turns not just an enemy soldier – but a conqueror, and a foreigner into a brother in Christ. It's another Easter message that Jesus, the Son of God, accepts all people. The early church had to scramble to understand and take this event in, accept it and then – internalize it and make it a habit. Talk about being confused and struggling to understand. Jesus once again turned the disciple's world and faith views up side down. He broke all the religious, social and cultural conventions.

And Peter nailed it. "He began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know

the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.” But this is for everyone – no matter who they are!

And then the Holy Spirit put a stamp on Peter and Cornelius’ interaction. “The Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out - even on Gentiles. They heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.” It’s the Almighty saying – here is proof I’m Lord of all Creation.” Then there was a baptism.

Next Peter had to convince the other disciples of this instruction from the Almighty. Unfortunately this was an ongoing struggle in the early church. Who is in and who is out? Jesus clearly demonstrated – his holy way, his highway of salvation is for everyone! We can all be inside!

This event does connect with the resurrection event. The people who put the lectionary together knew what they were doing. Jesus came for all people. Even every last one of you! And even me! He meant all those teachings and interactions with foreigners.

And then of course in our two resurrection passages today – we find that this is not just an effort on behalf of in house people – the Jews. It’s on behalf of the whole world! It’s always important to notice when scripture backs up scripture. And who does Jesus announce his resurrection to – first? Women – second class citizens! It’s similar to Moses being saved from death by five women! This is another proof that Jesus is real. His teachings are the truth and need to be followed. Our Creator doesn’t just offer us a life boat of rescue. Instead the cross offers **everyone** a new ship to get on and live on together!

How does our Colossians scripture tie in with resurrection and love? It gives us the “so what” to Jesus’ death & resurrection. It’s an in depth explanation of what it means to put to death our

old lives, sins, & habits; to accept forgiveness and have eternal life and grow a new self.

Let’s read it, including the Voice translation explanation note that starts us off. (Col 3:1-4)

“The Apostle Paul knew the people in Colossae were facing many religious and philosophical options, none of which are neutral. Notice Paul doesn’t say, ‘Just add Jesus to what you already believe,’ or ‘Factor Jesus into your philosophy,’ or, ‘Include Jesus in this or that ritual.’ The claim that “Jesus is Lord” does not allow that. If Jesus is Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all creation, than all other teachings must give way. All people must bow (worship) before Him and only Him.”

Here is the text. “So *it comes down to this*: since you have been raised with the Anointed One, *the Liberating King*, set your mind on heaven above. The Anointed is there, seated at God’s right hand. Stay focused on what’s above, not on earthly things, because your *old* life is dead and gone. Your *new* life is now hidden, enmeshed with the Anointed who is in God. On that day when the Anointed One—who is our very life—is revealed, you will be revealed with Him in glory!”

This picture is old fashioned gospel. The idea that Christ is seated beside God the Father – tells us Jesus has a place of authority and honor. The events of the resurrection back this up. We are invited to accept this truth and then, live it. This is the Good News of Easter!

Regardless of what is happening around us, and even within us, we can count on Jesus. But it requires believing in and following Jesus. Then my priorities shift. My attitudes shift. And we join Peter in welcoming all kinds of people into Jesus’ kingdom. If Jesus doesn’t make a difference in who we are becoming and how we love, then we have no idea what the resurrection is about. If Jesus doesn’t make a difference in our lives, in how we spend our time, money, thought, and how we treat others, then we have no idea what the resurrection is about.

Every country right now is focused on their own citizens to a greater or lesser degree. And as always politics, and economics is involved. But hopefully each country is watching out a little bit for other countries. Closing borders temporarily is one way of doing this. It's protecting people. Hopefully though there will be more looking out for each other, more cooperation to understand and control and beat the coronavirus. It fits in with Jesus message to save the world. In this case physically. And this virus is showing how intertwined we are with each other.

So we need to urge our governments to get it right. To help those with the least resources around the world to control the virus. Tying Peter and Cornelius and Jesus' resurrection together with Covid-19 I think is good theology. It ties in with our Colossians text. This is not a new thought but it's in a new context for us today. Work together or die! But it's not just physically. Jesus invites the whole world to take on his priorities so we can have real peace.

Maybe a result of this virus is that more people catch God's vision of the resurrection and love. It's a reminder Jesus died for my sins, and your sins, and for everyone's sins. Maybe this is what the Almighty wants to get through to the world with COVID-19. We have to work together for physical survival as well as health and justice economics for all. And this also involves spiritual renewal. And it involves inviting others to be transformed.

One of you shared with me about John Dominic Crossan. He is a historical Jesus scholar and he says he prefers the Eastern churches' artistic vision of the resurrection. He says and writes, "In the West, we have Jesus coming out of the tomb, alone, looking a bit like an athlete coming out well buffed from the gym. But in the Eastern (Orthodox) churches, you have Jesus holding the hand of Adam and Eve and leading them out of Hades. We could see it everywhere we went in Turkey, and we were curious. We started visiting churches in Egypt, Russia and Romania and realized that this is the normal resurrection image for all of Eastern Christianity.

John Crossan continues: "The Eastern churches have a universal vision of Jesus arising with all of humanity, symbolized by Adam and Eve. (and one reminder that we have all sinned) Western Christianity has a more individualistic vision of Jesus, arising glorious and triumphant but also solitary and alone. (individualist)

"In the Eastern vision, all of humanity is inside the story. I'm participating in the story. It's not outside of me; it's not like somebody is doing it for me. We in the West have far too much substitution. We think it's going to be done for us or already has been done for us. And that gives us nothing to do. You just have to believe enough weird stuff to get to heaven."

Interesting ideas. Worth considering. In the John text – we have a **ONE ON ONE** story. Jesus told Mary Magdalene to go tell the disciples. And she went directly to them. In Matthew's scripture, we find that 2 Mary's went to the tomb. In the Mark rendition of the story, 3 women went to the tomb. And in the Luke story, a **GROUP** of women went.

Evidently Western Christianity focuses on the John version. But Eastern Christianity focuses on Luke's version of who went to the tomb. If you want to dive in deeper to the differences and why, please do. But for today, it's worth noting that Western Christianity being an individualist culture, tends to focus more on the John version of Jesus resurrection and it's evangelism as well as testimonies are more individualistic.

So I think it's worth considering another way to understand the resurrection. It doesn't change our basic theology. Instead – I think the Eastern Churches idea here is a good one. Everyone in the world is connected and needs Jesus!

It fits in with what Jesus commands us to do. In a real way, this is why the church exists. It's so easy to get caught up in tradition, the ways we do things, and our theology, but at the core, Israel was to be a light to the nations. The church is to pick up that task.

But too often it's about preserving the institution, providing comfort to ourselves, and guarding our habits. And less and less focus is on – reaching out – really reaching out. Telling the story of Jesus – through our experiences. And helping each other connect or reconnect to Jesus resurrection power and love. Helping people grow their faith, live their trust, in the God of resurrection power and love.

It's not an accident that some of Jesus best known words are: "I am here speaking with all the authority of God, *who has commanded Me to give you this commission*: Go out and make disciples in all the nations. Ceremonially wash them through baptism in the name of the *triune God*: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then disciple them. *Form them in the practices and postures that I have taught you*, and show them how to follow the commands I have laid down for you. And I will be with you, day after day, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

Sharing our experiences with the risen Lord and Savior is an important thing we learn from the resurrection stories. In this time of anxiety and fear and uncertainty, everyone can find hope, trust, praise, joy, living water, true sight, and witness in Jesus and His Kingdom.

Our testimony is: Jesus has Risen.  
Our life experiences are: JESUS HAS RISEN!  
And our faith proclaims **JESUS HAS RISEN!**

As Jesus moved out beyond the walls of the religious structures of his day, we also are called to leave behind the hallowed place and the quiet sanctuary, and to make all of life the place of encounter where God can communicate with all human kind, where life itself becomes holy through lives renewed with his love.

Jesus has Risen! HE HAS RISEN INDEED!

### **Ritual:**

Take some time and record, write down, and share how you have seen God's resurrection power and love over death – or anti-life. In this time of pandemic, people all over the world are

finding ways to help one another. I believe this is the power of God's love in the world. What do you see locally? Big or small? Far away or nearby?

Then place your observations somewhere that you can add to and look up when you need a reminder of Jesus resurrection power and love.

## **Easter 2020 Scriptures      The Voice**

Acts 10:34-43, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, Colossians 3:1-4, John 20:1-18 or Mt 28:1-10; Luke 28:1-12

### **Acts 10:34-43      Peter and Cornelius's Interaction**

**Peter:** <sup>34</sup> It is clear to me now that God plays no favorites, <sup>35</sup> that God accepts every person whatever his or her culture or ethnic background, that God welcomes all who revere Him and do right. <sup>36</sup> *You already know that* God sent a message to the people of Israel; it was a message of peace, peace through Jesus the Anointed—who is King of all people. <sup>37</sup> You know this message spread through Judea, beginning in Galilee where John called people to be ritually cleansed through baptism.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup> You know God identified Jesus as the uniquely chosen One by pouring out the Holy Spirit on Him, by empowering Him. You know Jesus went through the land doing good *for all* and healing all who were suffering under the oppression of the evil one, for God was with Him. <sup>39</sup> My friends and I stand as witnesses to all Jesus did in *the region of Judea and the city of Jerusalem*. The people of our capital city killed Him by hanging Him on a tree, <sup>40</sup> but God raised Him up on the third day and made it possible for us to see Him. <sup>41</sup> Not everyone

was granted this privilege, only those of us whom God chose as witnesses. We actually ate and drank with Him after His resurrection. <sup>42</sup> He told us to spread His message to everyone and to tell them that He is the One whom God has chosen to be Judge, *to make a just assessment of all people*—both living and dead. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets tell us about Him and assert that every person who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through His name.

The true gospel is becoming increasingly clear as the church spreads and develops. What happens that day in Caesarea changes the face of Christianity forever. It builds a bridge from Jews to Gentiles, from insiders to outsiders, and sends the community of Jesus on a journey beyond the kind of religious and cultural barriers that all people erect. Through Peter's short trip, the church makes an important journey toward reaching the ends of the earth because the message of Jesus is not for the Jews alone but for all people of all time. This is a hard lesson, and not everyone is eager to learn it.

<sup>44</sup> *Peter wasn't planning to stop at this point, but the Holy Spirit suddenly interrupted and came upon all the people who were listening.* <sup>45-</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *They began speaking in foreign languages (just as the Jewish disciples did on the Day of Pentecost), and their hearts overflowed in joyful praises to God. Peter's friends from Joppa—all of them Jewish, all circumcised—were stunned to see that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on outsiders.*

**Peter:** <sup>47</sup> Can anyone give any good reason not to ceremonially wash these people through

baptism<sup>[b]</sup> *as fellow disciples? After all, it's obvious they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did on the Day of Pentecost.*

<sup>48</sup> So he had them baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. The new disciples asked him to stay for several more days.

## **Luke 24 The Voice (VOICE)**

**24** Early on Sunday morning, even before the sun had fully risen, these women made their way back to the tomb with the spices *and ointments* they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> When they arrived, they found the stone was rolled away from the tomb entrance, <sup>3</sup> and when they looked inside, the body of the Lord Jesus was nowhere to be seen. <sup>4</sup> They didn't know what to think. As they stood there in confusion, two men suddenly appeared standing beside them. These men seemed to glow with light. <sup>5</sup> The women were so terrified that they fell to the ground facedown.

This phrase, "Son of Man," is very important in Luke's story and may have many layers of meaning. It may mean "epitome of humanity" or "prime example of what a human can be." But it also evokes a specific passage of Scripture that is very important to Jewish people, [Daniel 7:13-27](#). There the phrase "Son of Man" refers to a king who receives an eternal and universal kingdom, and it also represents "the saints of the Most High"—the people of God. In light of Jesus' central message about the kingdom of God, it is likely that the phrase suggests Jesus is the long-awaited Anointed One who launches a new era in human history and who creates a community of people who represent the eternal and universal kingdom of God. In this way, "Son of" suggests "new generation of," and "Man" suggests

“humanity.” Jesus is Himself the new generation of humanity (a second Adam, a new beginning), and the community He creates shares this identity (a new creation, a new humanity in Jesus). The two messengers here use this pregnant phrase in a way that shocks everyone: The way this long-awaited Anointed One receives His kingdom is not through conventional military victory where enemies are defeated and killed. No, this King receives His kingdom by suffering, dying, and rising again Himself. Amazing news—good news!

**Two Men:** Why are you seeking the living One in the place of the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here. He has risen *from the dead*. Don’t you remember what He told you way back in Galilee? <sup>7</sup> He told you that the Son of Man must be handed over to wicked men, He must be crucified, and then on the third day He must rise.

<sup>8</sup> The women did remember Jesus’ words about this, <sup>9</sup> so they returned from the tomb and found the eleven and recounted for them—and others with them—everything they had experienced.

<sup>10-11</sup> The Lord’s emissaries<sup>[a]</sup> heard their stories as fiction, a lie; they didn’t believe a word of it. (By the way, this group of women included Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, along with a number of others.) <sup>12</sup> Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. *When he reached the opening*, he bent down, looked inside, and saw the linen burial cloths lying there. But the body was gone. He walked away, full of wonder about what had happened.

## Colossians 3:1-4

Paul knows the people in Colossae are facing many religious and philosophical options, none of which are neutral. Notice Paul doesn’t say, “Just add Jesus to what you already believe,” or, “Factor Jesus into your philosophy,” or, “Include Jesus in this or that ritual.” The claim that “Jesus is Lord” does not allow that. If Jesus is Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of all creation, then all other teachings must give way. All people must bow before Him and only Him.

**3** So *it comes down to this*: since you have been raised with the Anointed One, *the Liberating King*, set your mind on heaven above. The Anointed is there, seated at God’s right hand. <sup>2</sup> Stay focused on what’s above, not on earthly things, <sup>3</sup> because your *old* life is dead and gone. Your *new* life is now hidden, enmeshed with the Anointed who is in God. <sup>4</sup> On that day when the Anointed One—who is our<sup>[a]</sup> very life—is revealed, you will be revealed with Him in glory!

## John 20:1-18

As the lifeless body of Jesus is laid into the virgin tomb, those who witnessed the spectacle retreat into the city that has claimed the lives of so many prophets. All are crushed that their teacher and friend has died such a horrible death. Their hopes are dashed against the rocks of Golgotha. In the first hours of grief, Jesus' followers huddle together in secret in the city, hoping to avoid arrests and executions. They mourn. They grieve. They remember. Three days later, some venture outside the city and return to the place where He was buried. Miraculously, the stone has been rolled back, and the rock-hewn tomb is empty. Has someone taken His body? Are His enemies laying a trap for His followers? Or perhaps—could it be—that the last days have arrived?

**20** Before the sun had risen on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene made a trip to the tomb where His body was laid to rest. In the darkness, she discovered the covering had been rolled away. <sup>2</sup> She darted out of the garden to find Simon Peter and the dearly loved disciple to deliver this startling news.

**Mary Magdalene:** They have taken the body of our Lord, and we cannot find Him!

<sup>3</sup> Together, they all departed for the tomb to see for themselves. <sup>4</sup> They began to run, and Peter could not keep up. The beloved disciple arrived first <sup>5</sup> but did not go in. There was no corpse in the tomb, only the linens and cloths He was wrapped in. <sup>6</sup> When Simon Peter finally arrived, he went into the tomb and observed the same: <sup>7</sup> the cloth that covered His face appeared

to have been folded carefully and placed, not with the linen cloths, but to the side. <sup>8</sup> After Peter pointed this out, the other disciple (who had arrived long before Peter) also entered the tomb; and based on what he saw, faith began to well up inside him! <sup>9</sup> Before this moment, none of them understood the Scriptures and why He must be raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then they all went to their homes.

<sup>11</sup> Mary, however, stood outside the tomb sobbing, crying, and kneeling at its entrance. <sup>12</sup> As she cried, two heavenly messengers appeared before her sitting where Jesus' head and feet had been laid.

**Heavenly Messengers:** <sup>13</sup> Dear woman, why are you weeping?

**Mary Magdalene:** They have taken away my Lord, and I cannot find Him.

<sup>14</sup> After uttering these words, she turned around to see Jesus standing before her, but she did not recognize Him.

**Jesus:** <sup>15</sup> Dear woman, why are you sobbing? Who is it you are looking for?

She still had no idea who it was before her. Thinking He was the gardener, she muttered:

**Mary Magdalene:** Sir, if you are the one who carried Him away, then tell me where He is and I will retrieve Him.

**Jesus:** <sup>16</sup> Mary!

**Mary Magdalene** (*turning to Jesus and speaking in Hebrew*): Rabboni, my Teacher!

**Jesus:** <sup>17</sup> Mary, you cannot hold Me. I must rise above this world to be with My Father, who is also your Father; My God, who is also your God. Go tell this to all My brothers.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene obeyed and went directly to His disciples.

The hope of resurrection has often been a topic on the lips of Jesus. Now it is taking shape. Confusion gives way to conviction as Jesus appears alive over the next few Sundays. One by one He convinces His followers that God has raised Him from the dead.

**Mary Magdalene** (*announcing to the disciples*): I have seen the Lord, and this is what He said to me . . .

### **Matthew 28:1-10**

**28** After the Sabbath, as the light of the next day, the first day of the week, crept over Palestine, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb *to keep vigil*. <sup>2</sup> Earlier there had been an earthquake. A messenger of the Lord had come down from heaven and had gone to the grave. He rolled away the stone and sat down on top of it. <sup>3</sup> He *veritably* glowed. He was vibrating with light. *His clothes were light, white like transfiguration*, like fresh snow. <sup>4</sup> The soldiers guarding the tomb were terrified. They froze like stone.

<sup>5</sup> The messenger spoke to the women, *to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary*.

**Messenger of the Lord:** Don't be afraid. I know you are here keeping watch for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> But Jesus is not here. He was raised, just as He said He would be. Come over to the grave, and see for yourself. <sup>7</sup> And

then go straight to His disciples, and tell them He's been raised from the dead and has gone on to Galilee. You'll find Him there. Listen carefully to what I am telling you.

<sup>8</sup> The women were both terrified and thrilled, and they quickly left the tomb and went to find the disciples and give them this *outstandingly good* news. <sup>9</sup> But while they were on their way, they saw Jesus Himself.

**Jesus** (*greeting the women*): Rejoice.

The women fell down before Him, kissing His feet and worshiping Him.

**Jesus:** <sup>10</sup> Don't be afraid. Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee. Tell them I will meet them there.

<sup>11</sup> As the women were making their way to the disciples, some of the soldiers who had been standing guard *by Jesus' tomb recovered themselves*, went to the city, and told the chief priests everything that had happened—*the earthquake just after dawn, the heavenly messenger, and his commission to the Marys*. <sup>12</sup> The chief priests gathered together all the elders, *an emergency conference of sorts*. *They needed a plan. They decided the simplest course was bribery*: they would pay off the guards <sup>13</sup> and order them to say that the disciples had come in the middle of the night and had stolen Jesus' corpse while they slept. <sup>14</sup> The chief priests promised the soldiers they would run interference with the governor so that the soldiers wouldn't be punished *for falling asleep when they were supposed to be keeping watch*. <sup>15</sup> The guards took the bribe and spread the story around town—and indeed, you can still

find people today who will tell you *that Jesus did not really rise from the dead, that it was a trick, some sort of sleight of hand.*

<sup>16</sup>The eleven disciples, *having spoken to the Marys*, headed to Galilee, to the mountain where they were to meet Jesus. <sup>17</sup>When the disciples saw Jesus there, many of them fell down and worshiped, *as Mary and the other Mary had done*. But a few hung back. They were not sure (*and who can blame them?*). <sup>18</sup>Jesus came forward and addressed *His beloved disciples*.

**The disciples don't know what to think or how to act. Nothing like this has ever happened before.**

**Jesus:** I am here speaking with all the authority of God, *who has commanded Me to give you this commission:* <sup>19</sup>Go out and make disciples in all the nations. Ceremonially wash them through baptism in the name of the *triune God*: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Then disciple them. *Form them in the practices and postures that I have taught you*, and show them how to follow the commands I have laid down for you. And I will be with you, day after day, to the end of the age.

## **Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24**

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the Eternal because He is *always* good.

He never ceases to be loving and kind.

<sup>2</sup>Let *the people of Israel* proclaim:

“He never ceases to be loving and kind.”

<sup>14</sup>He is my strength, and He is the reason I sing;

He has been there to save me *in every situation*.

<sup>15</sup>In the tents of the righteous *soldiers of God*, there are shouts of joy and victory. *They sing:*  
“The right hand of the Eternal has shown His power.

<sup>16</sup>The mighty arm of the Eternal is raised *in victory*;  
the right hand of His has shown His power.”

<sup>17</sup>I will not die. I will live.

I will live to tell about all the Eternal has done.

<sup>18</sup>The Eternal *has taught me many lessons*;

*He* has been strict and severe,

but even in His discipline, He has not allowed me to die.

Early Christians found in the words of this psalm a wonderful way of describing the significance of Jesus. He was the rejected stone whom God made the cornerstone of a brand-new temple ([verses 22–24](#)).

<sup>19</sup>Open *wide* to me the gates of justice so that I may walk through them and offer praise *and worship* to the Eternal.

<sup>20</sup>This is the gate of the Eternal;  
the righteous *children of God* will go through it.

<sup>21</sup>I will praise You because You answered me *when I was in trouble*.

You have become my salvation.

<sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected has become the very stone that holds together the entire foundation.

<sup>23</sup>This is the work of the Eternal,  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>24</sup>This is the day the Eternal God has made;  
let us celebrate and be happy today.

<sup>25</sup>O Eternal One, save us, we beg You.

O Eternal One, we beg You, bring us success!

<sup>26</sup>He who comes in the name of the Eternal will be blessed;<sup>[b]</sup>

we have blessed You from the house of the Eternal.

<sup>27</sup> The Eternal is the True God;  
He shines His light on us.

Let the feast begin.

Bring the sacrifice, and tie it to the horns of the altar.

<sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I give You thanks;  
You are my God, and I praise You.

<sup>29</sup> Give thanks to our Eternal Lord; He is always good.

He never ceases to be loving and kind.

<sup>3</sup> Let *the priests of Aaron's line* proclaim:

“He never ceases to be loving and kind.”

<sup>4</sup> Let the people who fear the Eternal proclaim:

“He never ceases to be loving and kind.”

<sup>5</sup> When trouble surrounded me, I cried out to the Eternal;

He answered me and brought me to a wide, open space.

<sup>6</sup> The Eternal is with me,

so I will not be afraid of anything.

*If God is on my side, how can anyone hurt me?*

<sup>7</sup> The Eternal is on my side, a champion for my cause;

so when I look at those who hate me, victory will be in sight.

<sup>8</sup> It is better to put your faith in the Eternal *for your security*

than to trust in people.

<sup>9</sup> It is better to put your faith in Him *for your security*

than to trust in princes.

<sup>10</sup> All *these nations surround me, squeezing me from all sides;*

with the name of the Eternal, I will destroy

them.

<sup>11</sup> They *rose up against me*, squeezed me from all sides, yes, from all sides;

with the name of the Eternal, I will destroy them.

<sup>12</sup> They surrounded me like *a swarm of bees*;  
they were destroyed *quickly and thoroughly*—

Flaring up like a pile of thorns—

with the name of the Eternal, I will destroy them.

<sup>13</sup> I was pushed *back*, attacked so that I was about to fall,

but the Eternal was there to help me *keep my balance*.