

**TEXT: Luke 24:1-12**

<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 into the hands of sinful men, 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.

**Prayer of the Day:**

Almighty God, by the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you conquered death and opened the gate to eternal life. Grant that we, who have been raised with him through Baptism, may walk in newness of life and ever rejoice in the hope of sharing his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be dominion and praise now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia. (Psalm 118:24 cf. NIV)

**Sermon Text:**

I hate waiting! I know, not what you expected at the beginning of an Easter sermon, right? But it is an absolute truth for me. I know it doesn't bother some people but for me, waiting, especially in long lines, well, I can imagine that a ridiculously long wait in an unending line is exactly what hell is like. Why bring this up? Because as our Gospel lesson opened the long wait has come to an end.

Those women had been doing exactly that. They had set up vigil at the cross on Good Friday. They had seen Jesus suffer and die. To close to the ending of the day, they had seen where Joseph had laid him and noted that they would need to return to care for the corpse as was the custom but the next day was Sabbath, so no work could be done. Death would have to be avoided. They would have to wait until Sunday to take the spices out to the tomb to care for the body as best they could. No doubt it wasn't going to be a pleasant task. No doubt they weren't waiting with the anxious excitement of a child hunting Easter eggs, but they were waiting and when the time came, they were up early before the dawning of the day to prepare themselves, to prepare the spices for this last act of devotion and love.

One wonders if they even said anything as they headed out that morning. Only one question is recorded on their lips as they draw near, “How will we roll away the stone?” Ah, yes, the stone, so massive, so final, designed to seal the tomb so that death would remain tightly shut inside. It meant death was inside, the tomb used, a loved one, their teacher, the one they had thought was messiah was dead.

You know the feeling right? Oh for sure, you were not there, but sin no doubt has wrapped it's ugly tentacles around you. Satan has reared his terrifying head in life. Death or at least the stench of it has left you feeling as if the stone was not rolled in front of a tomb but your heart and any hope was gone, shut out, impossible. We don't love doing it, but we buy into the ways of the world around us, we gather up our spices and trudge toward death, toward doom. Unable to save ourselves from it, we give into the hopelessness. What other choice do we have.

What does God's Word tell us next? *They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.* Nothing was what they had expected, though they should have. The tomb was empty, death was gone, in fact, the body it had claimed was gone. I can almost see the utter confusion on their faces as they began to wonder what in the world had happened. And then, *While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 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? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.*

Ah, yes, death would be undone. Christ would not remain in the tomb but on the third day death, *the last enemy to be destroyed* (1 Corinthians 15:26), would fall. The last enemy because sin, Satan and hell had been devastated on Good Friday now the proof, the rock-solid assurance that we are saved, the debt has been paid, the price accepted. Because he lives, death shall not over come us either. We shall reign in heaven forever with Jesus. Every promise rings true.

This fact, changes things. It shatters the hopelessness. For it announces that sin cannot win not against this hero who greets it with the forgiveness His perfect life paid for on the cross. Satan and his sinister shame cannot overcome us not covered in the perfect life of Christ given to us through faith. Not even the dread decay of death can defeat us but simply ushers us into the glory which Jesus has claimed for himself and extends to us in perfect grace and love. You dear friends no longer must pick around in the stench of death for some glimmers of hope. Our hope and our life is now hidden in, with Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Oh for sure, here we wait. We are born into the sin of our parents, and their parents. We live in a world that often prizes unbelief more than the truth. We live with ourselves, who so often must battle not just with the world and the people out there but the sin which rages in here, in our hearts and in our minds. No doubt, it even sometimes feels like we cannot win, as if the dark forces which swirl around us cannot be defeated ... But Easter cries out against them and urges us, even as it comforts us, ***"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"***

May we remember, just as the women at the tomb. Even in our darkest days, our greatest foes have been defeated. You have been made a child of God through faith. You are an heir of heaven. Easter shines the truth through the darkness. The tomb is empty we are free. We are victorious. In our salvation, a new day has dawned.

No, I don't like waiting. I know there will be days when the wait for Jesus to once again reappear and show the world the truth will seem long and I will be weary. Satan will work hard to roll the stone in front of the tomb to convince me that he has won. But Easter, with all of its joy, no Jesus with all of his power, his glory, his grace stands triumphant and you dear Christian, by grace, through faith in the Son of God, your life is now hidden with him. Yes, He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!!