

# Just As He Said

## Matthew 28:1–11

**Matthew 28:1–10 (NIV): After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.**

**2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.**

**5 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”**

**8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**

“Seeing is believing”. This age-old proverb attributed to a 17th century English monk is so commonplace, so common sense, that it would be hard to imagine that it ever had to be thought of and written down. Our societies and our biological makeups always place a greater emphasis on the seen. The things that can be verified. The events that have witnesses. So much more than the words that someone has said. Especially if you find yourself with someone who makes it a habit of making bold claims, unsubstantiated claims. It’s really quite normal to say something similar to “I’ll believe it when I see it’.

But I have an interesting question to pose to you. Has the opposite ever been true for you? Has what you have seen perhaps made you stop believing? Have events that have taken place, suddenly taken something that you held so firmly in your heart, and made it seem, albeit for a brief moment, impossible.

To see an example, we need go no further than the account of Easter morning as recorded in Matthew 28. **After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb."**

You have to feel for those two Marys. The women had been through a lot in the previous days. They saw their teacher, so gentle and kind to them, being bloodied and beaten. Their close and dear friend, a constant source of comfort, they saw him with his hands and his feet nailed, suspended in the air. They watched him, so peaceful, as he was in literal hell, albeit visible, seen by their eyes yet separated from all of God's comfort and presence. They saw a spear driven through his side and blood and water oozed out. They were there: Matthew 27:55-56 **"Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons."**

But he was no longer bleeding. He was dead. His body had grown stiff. His skin was cold to the touch and clammy. The blood dried and caked upon his body. A dried trail of the wounds that had struck him. A mouth that could no longer speak. Gentle eyes, now closed. A dead body placed in a tomb with dead air. Now they have come to look at the place where he lay.

What they had seen had made them forget what he had said. Jesus had told them. What was going to happen. He had said to them, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again. I must be handed over. I will be betrayed and killed, and then I will rise again. But oh, how those days had made them forget. What they had seen. Jesus so beaten. What they had seen, Jesus dying. What they had seen, Jesus' corpse pulled down from the executioners cross. Oh, how those sights had made them forget what Jesus had said.

And what about you? What have you seen that has made you forget what he said? When Monday comes and contradicts what you heard Sunday. When have you go by what you have seen rather than what you heard?

There is, and there always has been, and always will be a fight in you. I fight that goes on between what you have heard from God, and what you have seen with your eyes. When you have heard from God's Word that he loves you, and you are special and valued, but you can't seem to find any friends, let alone get your family to talk to you. When God says to you, I work all things in your life for your good, but there is a phone call, and you hear on the other side of the line: "It's a tumor, it's malignant, we need to start your chemotherapy as soon as possible." When you know that your children are a gift from God, but they are going absolutely crazy, and it doesn't seem that they are. But finally, and most

heartbreaking, when you know that God has said that he will watch over you as his dear child. But then you sit at that bedside, as breaths become shallow and labored, and you know it's not going to be long. What I am seeing, Lord, really doesn't seem to match up with what you have said.

It is at this point that we must look back to Easter. Look at the miracle of your Jesus. Listen to what Jesus said, look at what Jesus did. **“Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”** Jesus said what he was going to do. And that is what happened. Jesus said death cannot hold me and I will rise again from its clutches on the third day. Jesus said that I will defeat the enemy of death. And he did.

And as those women hurried from the empty tomb, there he was. The breathless lived. The silent spoke. The cold was warm with life once again. Even though what they had seen on Good Friday made them forget what Jesus had said, Jesus showed them that what he said, he will do. Even though it seemed impossible for Jesus to come back from that death, Jesus showed that what he has promised will always be accomplished. God showed them things that they had not seen, things they couldn't possibly imagine, things he said. Just as he said, so he does.

What does this mean for you? For you as a Christian, it means absolutely everything. Easter means everything for you. Easter means for you, that everything God has said, so he will do. Everything that Jesus said he would do, so he did. It didn't matter how things looked, it didn't matter what those women had seen and experienced, it didn't matter how powerful death itself appeared, as he said, so he did.

Everything that God has said to you, so he will do. It matters not how it appears, God has promised you that he will take care of you as his child. So, he has said, so he will do. Jesus has said to you, he will be with you and give you the strength you need, so he has said, so he will do.

But most importantly, oh so important, is at that bedside, or that gravesite, or that tombstone. Where Jesus has said to you that all who believe in him will live even though they die. That all those with faith in Jesus will leave this veil of tears and dwell with him for all eternity. That death will not win. That you too will be resurrected as he was. Jesus has said that you as a Christian will be reunited with them. So, he has said, so he will do. Just as he said.

“Seeing is believing”. Brothers and sisters in Christ, don’t ever let what you have seen, make you forget what God has said. Don’t ever fear that what God has promised will not be accomplished. Easter shows us clearly, that as God says, so he does. And Jesus tells you, that he has defeated death, and you will be resurrected from the grave. Just as he said, so he will do. Amen.