

He is Risen!

Imagine the feelings in the hearts of those women on the way to the tomb of Jesus that early morning so many years ago. Hopes crushed, sorrow wrapping around them like a suffocating cloak. Their steps were the joyless tread of the mourner, and the load of spices they carried felt heavy and unreal. They mused between themselves who would remove the stone from the mouth of the tomb; they knew it was too heavy for them. And what would the guard say or do to them? Would they allow them to fulfill this last ritual to the one whom they so dearly loved?

They also carried a hint of fear of the people who wanted Jesus killed. Quite possibly that was the reason for their early pre-dawn departure. They believed in this man Jesus. They believed he was a good man. More than that, they believed he was indeed the Son of God. Any doubt they may have had was dispelled the day he died. The elements themselves seemed to quake and groan when he died. No one had ever died like he did. It appeared he simply quit living; and such love, such care, even when he hung suspended between heaven and earth. No man, at least none they knew, could have the grace, love, and forgiving character to die like their beloved friend Jesus.

They drew nearer, nearer the tomb. A stillness hung over the place, like the morning was holding its breath. The swish of their skirts and the early morning wake-up call of a bird were all that was heard. Almost there, they strained their eyes through the early morning shadows to see. Yes, there it was. Their breath caught. What! The stone was not covering it! Immediately, fear and wonder gripped their hearts. Thoughts raced through their minds: Why? What happened? The women looked at each other. What should they do? Tentatively, they took a step forward, then another and another. Then they saw them—the guards—lying on the ground as if fast asleep. A voice startled them: “Whom seek ye? He is not here; he is risen!” Then they saw an angel sitting on the stone, and their hearts leaped within them. What could this mean? “Come, see the place where he lay!”

At the angel’s command they bent down and entered the tomb. There were the grave clothes neatly laid aside, but he was gone without a trace. Dazed, the women exited and stood in excitement, fear, and wonder. “We must tell the rest!” said one, and rushed off down the path toward the city. Mary decided to stay and wait for her return. Perhaps, she thought, some clue would present itself as to his disappearance. Tears streamed down her face; oh, how she loved him.

A man appeared nearby, the gardener perhaps. Maybe he would know where the body of Jesus was. He could have taken it away. Through eyes brimming with tears, she called out to him, gesturing to the open tomb, “Where have you taken my Lord?”

“Mary,” he said. She would recognize that soft voice anywhere. “My Lord!” she replied. “Do not touch me,” he said, “but go tell the rest I have risen from the dead and will show myself to them.” Then he was gone.

He’s alive! He is real! Her heart raced, and the tears dried on her face as she ran to tell the wonderful news; the great news that has echoed and re-echoed down the corridors of time: “He is Risen!”

And because of that, every man, woman, and child who has lived or will live can be delivered from the curse of sin and have a home in eternal glory forever and ever! The power of Satan has been forever broken! There is no greater message of hope than this! “He is Risen!”

Jeff Goertzen

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