

Return and See!

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Easter / Resurrection; Restoration; Life / Isaiah 25:6-9; Psalm 16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Matthew 28:1-10

- › Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!
- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Resurrected King. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

What a glorious day today! The Easter lilies smell like Easter. The music sounds like Easter. The weather outside feels like Easter. Maybe you had an Easter Egg this morning to where it tastes like Easter. Today isn't about those senses. Today we get to see Easter through the eyes of those who witnessed the Resurrection and through our own eyes as well. This is such a great day to come together and see all that God has done for us in Christ: the forgiveness He offers; the salvation He won for us; the life that He secured for us.

I thank God that we have returned! One year ago preaching to an empty sanctuary on Easter Sunday was a bit anticlimactic to say the least. I thank God that we have returned and this year we see! Throughout our season of Lent we've been looking at God's Call to Return to Him. We looked at this through the eyes of the people that were there at the Passion. We've been comforted with God's call to return to Him, because *He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and that he Relents over disaster.* **Today on this Easter Day is continuing to accomplish of what He started on Good Friday.** Today as the women arrive at the tomb and they tell the disciples it all comes together as Jesus is Risen from the dead and **He invites the disciples and he invites you to return and see, to come and see Him.**

Why? Because when they see Jesus risen from the dead, they will begin to understand the significance of everything He has been doing over the last three years. They will start

English Standard Version Chapter 3

to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge

And that realization will lead them to share the Good News with others, that they, too, might come to know the “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding.”

But first, let’s **return** to that first Easter Morning. The Sabbath had past. It was early in the morning on that first day of the week and the two Mary’s went to see the tomb. It’s almost as if we should be expecting something new. It was a new day, a new dawn, but then...we are reminded of what happened. They were headed to the tomb. They were headed to the place where Jesus body was laid. They knew Jesus was dead. They witnessed it with their own eyes, they were present when Jesus was buried.

Now they bring their own darkness and defeat with them early on the first day of the week. They were grieving, they were mourning. They were **returning to see** Jesus, the body of Jesus to finish prepping his body for burial.

Today, we too bring our own darkness and defeat. The last year has been difficult to say the least. Some of us have experienced disease, others of us the death of a loved one, and still others depression has set in, while others of us are divided from people we love, whether its by distance, political differences, Covid Responses differences. I can honestly say this has been one of the darkest years of my life, maybe yours too. It’s been a struggle. A year ago I mentioned that we would celebrate Easter together when we could in a big and grand way, even if it’s wasn’t Easter Sunday...but we know what has happened. We’ve limped our way through the year...many of you stayed home from the Lord’s House a lot longer then the first three months when we were shut down. So here we are, we’ve **returned to the place to see**...and we’ve brought our own

darkness and defeat. Now unlike the Mary's we are expecting something new. We are expecting something grand. We are expecting to sing the Alleluias!

It's been my tradition to come to the church earlier than normal on Easter, even in the years of the Sunrise service so that I can see...and yes I know what I am expecting to see...and even for me it's far grander.

The Women they've come to the tomb to see, living in the past, something new happens. The unexpected happens:

English Standard Version Chapter 28

And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

The Angel pushed the stone away, caused the earthquake and now is sitting there, the guards passed out. The women I'm sure are just as terrified. They have **returned to the tomb expecting to see** the dead body of Jesus...but now they see the stone rolled away, guards laying on the ground as though they are dead and an angel. Then they hear...Easter isn't just about sight...it's also about the message of what they heard.

The Angel proclaims to them:

English Standard Version Chapter 28

Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

What does the Angel say? **Come, see the place where he lay!** The Angel is inviting them in to the place where they were going to see that the body of Jesus is not there, but that He is alive!

This invitation to **see** will help enable them to take the message to the disciples. To invite the disciples to see that Jesus has kept his promises.

The Angel continues:

English Standard Version Chapter 28

7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

After they see, they go. Jesus is going before them to Galilee and the Angel tells them...you will see Him. The Marys will see Jesus! The Marys have heard the message that Jesus is alive. They have seen the place where he used to lie. And now they are going to see with their own eyes!

Matthew continues his narrative:

English Standard Version Chapter 28

8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

They departed quickly...yes, with fear. Who wouldn't? But also with great joy. As they are going quickly, before they arrive to the Upper Room where the disciples are at...the Marys **see Jesus**. They see their Lord living. This even continues to **refocus** their eyes for the promise that waits fulfillment with the Eleven in Galilee.

Jesus rises from the dead and then bids the disciples to come and see. He really bids the disciples after they had all fallen away to **“Return and See”** that I live. **“Return and See** that I have kept my promises. I told you that I was going to suffer, die at the hands of sinful men, and then be raised on the third day.”

This morning, this Easter morning, Jesus gives you the same invitation. **“Come and see” “Return and see!”** Over Lent we've looked at that grace from God and now we see it in fulfillment on this Easter day, with the Resurrection of your Savior. Over the last year and many not being in the Lord's House...it's time...it's time to **Return and See**. It's the same as “come and see.” **Come and look on the One who was pierced and see that the plan of salvation has been completed. Jesus is alive!** *Alleluia Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!*

Alleluia! Come and see what is in store for you: your resurrection. Your very life. Come and See!

But how do we see it? Where do we see it.

For the disciples, the answer was simple. Come to Galilee. Come to the mountain and you will find me. They did.

They came to the mountain and gathered at the feet of Jesus. He gave them the same task He gave to the women. It was simple. It was crucial. You've come. You've seen. You've worshiped. Now, go...Go and make disciples. Go and baptize. Go and teach. Go, and know that I am with you always. Come and See. Return and see. Then Go and Tell.

But we don't have a mountain. Jesus says, "**Come to me. Return to me,**" and we stand like Thomas at the Last Supper, gawking at Jesus, stunned by His words. "How can we know the way?"

He gives to you and me the way: He gives you and me the Church. That is to say, we know where to find Jesus, because God's promises and His Word make clear where to find Him. You will always find Christ "in the assembly of all believers among where the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel." "Where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, there He is among them."

We come to this place, because it is **here that we see Jesus**. We gaze at the cross of His crucifixion and ponder the penalty for our sins, which He willingly bore. We can see Him reach down and claim His own in Baptism. We can "taste and see that the Lord is good" as we receive Christ's very body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion. It is here that you **can see Him. It is here that you encounter the Resurrected Christ...because Jesus is alive!** *Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!*

And because **we see Him**, He bids us to go. It's no different for us as it was for the disciples. "**Come and see, Return and see...and then Go and Tell.**" **Then come again, be fed, go and tell.**

So today, as you have now come and seen, returned and seen the salvation won for you by your Lord and Savior, may you be moved to go into the world and to share the with others what you have seen. Be glad. Rejoice in Him. **Rejoice, Jesus is alive for you!** And you can start sharing with those closest to you!

Yes, today is a day to rejoice. We have returned...maybe thinking about the past and the dread and the darkness...but here today, we have seen a light. **A new day is dawning and Jesus is alive. Jesus is making all things new. Thanks be God that He does. Thanks be to God that Jesus is alive!**

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed Alleluia!

In the name of our Resurrected Lord. Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior, our Resurrected King. Amen.