

**“He Lives!”
Sermon - April 1, 2018 Easter**

Today as we recall the busiest morning in Jerusalem, we will focus only on one scenario as we listen to the joyful message of resurrection, and to those things which are the outcome of Jesus' resurrection.

On Good Friday, our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified at around 9 a.m. After very long agony, Jesus died at around 3 p.m. Then, some Jews, who loved Jesus, went to Pilate, the Governor, for permission to take His body off from the cross and to bury His body. They were in a big hurry because, based on their custom, after 6 p.m., they were not allowed to touch a dead body. Otherwise, they were excluded from the Passover celebrations. For this, on Friday late afternoon, the women did not have enough time to properly embalm body. From Friday at 6 p.m., they were resting and celebrating the Passover.

On Sunday, early in the morning, before the sunrise, we see three women approaching the tomb in a big hurry, where the body was laid. In their discussion, there is a question which is causing them serious concerns and worries: Who will roll the stone away? They knew what a huge stone was rolled to the entrance of the tomb on Friday in the early evening.

At that time, the tombs were not dug in the ground. Jerusalem is surrounded by hills, and the tombs were carved in the mountains. They looked like little rooms, and the entrances were closed carefully with a huge stone. No people or animals were able to enter.

On Saturday, the priests, although they broke the Sabbath, asked Pilate to seal the stone and to order Roman soldiers to guard the tomb of Jesus so that nobody could steal the body. The priests were afraid that the disciples would steal the body and spread the news that Jesus was resurrected. As the women realized they would not be able to roll the stone away, they became desperate. It is interesting that they continued their journey.

Did you have moments, when you wanted to do something desperately? Although you knew you would not be able to make it, you continued your journey, because something from inside told you not to give up. Go, and maybe something will happen.

These women were shocked when, from far away, they noticed that the stone was there, but was rolled away from the entrance of the tomb.

What would be your questions in their situation?

- Who did this?
- What happened here?
- Why is the stone rolled away?
- Why did Jesus' enemies not allow His dead body to rest in peace?

The women went through a series of shocks:

- the stone was rolled away;
- they saw an angel who was talking to them as a human;
- their shock increased as the angel was encouraging them not to be afraid; and
- then they were extremely shocked when the angel said that Jesus was not in the tomb anymore because He was resurrected.

- The top of their surprise was when the angel repeated to them word by word **the same words** what Jesus said to them a few days before, to go towards Galilee and they would meet Him in person on their way.

I think, psychologically, these women were so surprised, that they could not even digest and understand everything that happened there and what the angels said.

They started to run out from the cemetery to meet the disciples, who were hiding in an attic of a house.

I am highlighting only two things from this very rich and colourful story, and the consequences we have to take with us.

1. Jesus Christ is God, and He cannot be held by the tomb.

It is so laughable that the priests and His enemies wanted to seal the tomb, to make sure He would stay in forever.

These women were planning so many things to finish their customs around Jesus' body. They were prepared to touch the dead body of Jesus. Because they were using only their short way of thinking, they were focusing on death, and they could not remember what Jesus said to them previously that He HAS TO DIE, but in three days He will be alive again. They knew Jesus, but not very well. They did not or could not take His words seriously. Although they saw that Jesus resurrected Lazarus and another young 12 year old child, they could not imagine or believe that He is stronger than death and He will be resurrected because He is the resurrection and the life.

Somebody said, that "it is easier for me to solve the crossword if I know a few stories from the Bible". That is right, but if somebody knows just a few stories from the Bible, he or she won't be able to know who Jesus is as our personal Lord and Saviour.

What you know about the Bible and Jesus is not enough, dear beloved. You have to meet with the resurrected and Living Jesus Christ, and you have to submit your whole life to Him.

We are not together today to remember a person of history, but we are worshipping Jesus as our living God. We are here to listen to His message, and we will walk away taking His words with us.

2. If we are committed to know more about Jesus and to follow Him faithfully, we will face many unexpected obstacles. However, the second great message here today is, that **all these obstacles will be removed by Jesus.**

The women must say: there is a huge stone at the entrance of the tomb, but we will continue our journey, and we will not change our minds.

If they did NOT continue their journey, picturing the huge stone as an obstacle, if they had turned around halfway, they would never experience those miracles.

If you are committed to knowing more about Jesus, to meet Him in person, please start and continue your journey. Don't stop, don't turn back. On your journey, Jesus will come close to you, and He will assure you that He is God, and He loves you dearly.

These women were drawn to Jesus because they loved Him and they knew that Jesus loved them so much when He was amongst them. The love of Jesus is drawing today many people here to worship and to grow in faith.

Jesus did everything for you 2,000 years ago to be called THE CHILD OF GOD. He died for you, to show you that He stands above death. He is showing you now that He is the resurrection and the life. All those who believe in Him, follow Him and love Him - they will die but right at the same moment they will be resurrected in a different body and will live with Him in His glorious eternity, forever and ever.

Probably you still have a lot of questions about Him and the resurrection. Those questions can be obstacles in front of you in your journey. However, please trust Jesus. He will talk to you, and He will explain everything to you. He will roll the stones away so that you can grow in faith, and you can reach His eternal glory.

You have to promise today that you will never turn back, no matter how many unanswered questions, or obstacles, or bad experiences you have. You must follow Jesus faithfully, and put your trust in Him that He will lead you, holding your hands.

If you never heard before, now please hear this: God loves you with unconditional love. No matter who you are, no matter what your past is, no matter how much you know about Him, no matter how much faith you have, GOD LOVES YOU AS YOU ARE. You are precious to Him. The Holy Spirit will help you to understand this immeasurable and unconditional love; just continue your journey you started this morning. The Bible says: Those who have Jesus in their hearts have eternal life. However, those who are missing Jesus from their lives are missing something very precious. The faith in resurrected Jesus is essential for a peaceful and happy life.

Please notice that these women were not able to do anything to experience these miracles. Jesus did everything for them. Jesus' love attracted them to the tomb. Jesus sent the angels to talk to them. The angels repeated the words and reminded them what Jesus told them not long time ago.

The good news of resurrected Jesus gave them wings to run to the disciples and to share the good news with others.

The same Jesus is here today for you and me, and He is sharing with us these messages as gifts which are essential for all of us. He is offering His love and support for you and me and all of us, without any exclusion. He wants to lead you as well.

He is the same today as He was 2,000 years ago. If you invite them into your heart, you can count on Him now and always.

We, all of us, have many and different problems, and sometimes we have a feeling that we will collapse. Accident, illness, family problems... Who can resolve all these? we ask. Who will roll the stone away? We are stressed asking if we have a future. Often we say: I cannot take more, I will collapse.

If you believe that Jesus, with whom these women met on the first Easter day, is a living, loving and caring God, He will help you. If you follow Him, You will experience that He will roll the problems away. You always can count on Jesus.

You will experience that it is worth praying to Him, to call Him YOUR LORD.

His message to you today is: Trust in Me; Follow Me; I will walk with you. Amen