



**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**THE WOMEN, THE WITNESSES**  
**(Matthew 27:55, 56; Luke 23:55,56) Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 24:1-11**

Several women from Galilee were among the people of the passion. They had watched Jesus' brutal death from "a distance." Then they followed Joseph to see the tomb and how Jesus was laid in it. Finally, they returned home. The sadness and grief of that Friday's crucifixion lingered with them through the Sabbath day's rest.

Those women had been with Jesus and cared for Him, but we know the names of only a handful of them: Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas, Salome and Joanna the wife of Cuza. Now they had one last thing to do for Jesus. Before they would rest they would prepare spices to add to His body.

### **I. THESE WOMEN WERE THE FIRST TO LEARN OF JESUS' RESURRECTION**

So far in Jesus' passion, these women have been largely ignored by us. Who can remember that they watched Jesus die from a distance or that they saw His body placed in the tomb? Who has thought about the tears they must have shed?

But on this morning, they took center stage. They rose before the morning light. As dawn broke in the east announcing the first light after the Sabbath, they approached the tomb of Jesus. It was not too late to do some final preparation of Jesus' body, but they needed to beat the heat of another day. With heavy hearts they wondered who would roll the huge stone away that blocked the tomb's entry.

Imagine their shock and amazement when the tomb came into sight. The stone had already been rolled away! They went in—and yet they found no body! They were greeted by two angels in clothing that "gleamed like lightning." And the women were the first ever to hear the words, the words used by Christians everywhere on this day: "**He has risen!**" Three simple words that forever changed their lives and ours!

"**Go quickly and tell his disciples,**" the angel ordered, and the women quickly left. Fear flooded over them: "What did it all mean? How could it be?" Joy mingled with the fear: "Jesus is alive!" They trembled as they ran from the tomb.

They could not have gone far when suddenly Jesus appeared and greeted them—This was His first appearance after He rose. The women approached Him, tentatively at first. Could they believe their eyes? Then they "**clashed His feet and worshiped Him.**" "**Do not be afraid,**" Jesus said and repeated the instructions of the angel: "**Go and tell my brothers.**"

### **II. THE WOMEN'S ACCOUNT MADE NO SENSE TO THE DISCIPLES**

Soon they found the eleven and other followers of Jesus. How excited the women must have been to tell the good news! "**Jesus is alive!**" they announced. "**He is not in the tomb. He has risen from the dead.**" They had seen the empty tomb and the angels. They had heard the angel tell them He was alive. They had actually seen Jesus and talked with Him. They had the facts.

They kept telling their good news. You would expect the disciples to rejoice with them and celebrate. But, no, instead the disciples looked at the women as if they were crazy, and most who heard the women dismissed their story as fabricated nonsense.

The women got the kind of reaction from those who had followed Jesus that we might expect today from an unbelieving world. Maybe it was just that the news was too good to be true—not to mention impossible for man, but nothing is impossible for God.

I suppose we can hardly fault the disciples for their skepticism. But the women persisted, and they would soon be vindicated. While others ignored the women, Peter and John ran to the tomb to see what was happening. Yes, it was empty, but even they went away from it astounded.

Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb shortly after Peter and John left. She had not stayed with the other women long enough to hear the good news and to see Jesus. She was still overcome with grief and sobbing bitterly. That's when Jesus appeared also to her. He dried her tears even as He dries ours. Her grief changed to unspeakable joy. She ran off to share the good news. ***"I have seen the Lord,"*** she proclaimed.

The word from the women began to spread through Jerusalem. And, yes, the body was missing. Had Jesus really arisen from the dead as the women kept insisting?

### III. THE WOMEN WERE VINDICATED

Two men on their way out of the city to Emmaus wondered about the stories that were circulating. They soon found out the truth when Jesus joined them on the way and ate dinner with them. They, like the others, were slow to believe. But when Jesus spoke the Scriptures to them, their hearts burned within themselves. They recognized Him just before He vanished from their sight. They hurried immediately back to the city to share the good news.

There, they found that Jesus had already also appeared to Simon. Then, that evening, to the disciples behind closed doors, the Lord appeared yet again, saying: ***"Peace be with you!"*** He calmed their troubled hearts and began to prepare them for their future ministry. They would preach ***"repentance and forgiveness of sins ...in Jesus name to all nations."***

Gradually, more and more people believed the women's message, and it has been the keynote of the Christian message ever since. The disciples included it in the sermons they preached. The apostle Paul reminds us that our faith is meaningless without the resurrection. Only a living Jesus can, and does, give us life.

Today we are like the women on that blessed Easter morn. We have seen the empty tomb. We have seen and heard the risen Savior. His sacrifice for our sins is sure because He lives. His promises are true. His heaven is ready for us. His glory shines for us. He is risen. He lives for us.

He died and He lives for all the world. All who believe will have eternal life. All who do not believe need to hear the truth again and again and again from us.

Yes, now the message is ours to tell. Let us tell it the way those women told it, persisting even when some call it nonsense. Persisting because it is true! Let us tell it with the most simplistic innocence of a young child.

There is a story about an old gentleman who stood before the window of an art store where a picture of the crucifixion of Christ was on exhibition. As he stood there, a young boy stopped and stood beside him looking at the picture also.

Pointing to the picture, the gentleman asked the boy, "Do you know who that is?"

"Yes," came the answer very quickly, "That's our Savior."

The boy's face plainly showed surprise and pity at the gentleman's ignorance. Then, after a pause but with an evident desire to enlighten the man, the boy said, "Them's the soldiers, the Roman soldiers." And with a long sigh, "And that woman crying there, that's His mother."

After a moment, the boy added, "They killed him, Mister, yes, sir, they killed and buried Him."

The gentleman turned and resumed his walk, but he had not even gone a block, when he heard the childish treble of the boy calling, "Hey Mister, Hey, Mister!"

He turned and waited for the lad to catch up to him.

"I also wanted to tell you, He rose again! Yup, Mister, He rose again!"

HE IS RISEN! ----- He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia! AMEN and AMEN!

*The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. AMEN!*