

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Easter Sunday

**Matthew 28:1-10 “Good News is Alive in the World”**

Our theme for Lent this year has been, “*Tell Me Something Good.*” And over these past weeks, we’ve been doing just that—listening for good news. We’ve listened to parables about seeds that grow in ways we don’t fully understand. We’ve heard stories about tables where people are fed—more than fed—welcomed. We’ve watched Jesus move through the world in ways that bring healing, restoration, and hope. And if you’ve been paying attention, you might have noticed something: The good news is rarely loud at first. In fact, it’s often small. Easy to miss. Quietly taking root. But today—Easter morning—there is *nothing* quiet about it. Want to hear some good news? Here it is - **Christ is risen!** (*He is risen indeed.*)

But what does that mean? What’s so good about that? Because if we’re honest, Easter can start to feel familiar, you know? Come on. We’ve heard this story before. It seems like we hear it every year. And yes, we do. We know how it goes. The stone is rolled away. The tomb is empty. Christ is risen (he is risen indeed.) But the question underneath all of this is still here: Why does this matter? Here’s some more good news: Death cannot stop the good news. The good news is alive. It’s unbound. It has been unleashed into the world. Like the mustard seed, it grows without limit. Like water turned into wine, it surprises us with joy. Like loaves of

bread, it expands to feed each hungry soul. And now—even in the face of death—it will not be buried. It will *not* be silenced. “Yeah, sure pastor, it might not be silenced but there sure are a lot of voices trying to drown this good news out. It’s *scary!*” Okay. I’ll give you that. But I’ve got some more good news for you.

Notice the first thing the angel said in this story: “Do not be afraid.” But that raises another question. If this is such good news...why does the angel have to say, “*Do not be afraid*”? Because that’s not what the women were expecting that morning. They didn’t come looking for resurrection. They came to visit a tomb. You can almost feel that moment, can’t you? That early morning chill—just before the sun comes up. That quiet that sits heavy in the air. They came carrying grief. Carrying spices. Carrying the weight of everything that had just happened. They came to mourn. They came to say goodbye. They came because love doesn’t quite know what to do with itself when someone is gone. And maybe they came with just a little bit of unfinished hope—the kind you don’t say out loud because you don’t want to be disappointed again. But mostly—they came expecting death. Because by the end of that week, it looked like the world had made its decision. The empire had done its worst. The cross had done its work. The tomb had been sealed. Everything about that moment said: “This is how it is.” “This is how it has always been.” “This is how it will always be.” And if we’re honest—that’s a story we know.

We know what it's like to look at the world and think, "This is just how things are." Violence happens. People get hurt. The gears of corruption grind on. Grief shows up uninvited. You learn to live with it. You learn to expect it. You learn not to hope for too much. That's the world the women were living in that morning. The powers of this world tried to make it final. Seal the tomb. Post the guard. Lock it down. Nothing more to see here folks. Nothing more to hope for. Nothing more to change.

And yet—Matthew refuses to tell this story *quietly*. I love how his version is so – *kinetic*. The earth shakes. An angel descends. The stone is rolled away. The guards fall to the ground like dead men. This is not subtle. This is not contained. This is not business as usual. This is a declaration: Something has shifted. What looked sealed... *isn't* sealed anymore. What looked final... isn't final anymore. The status quo—the "how it has been and how it must always be"—has been shaken. And suddenly the world is not as closed as it once seemed. The good news is not just alive—it is on the move. It is breaking open what we thought was closed. It's undoing what we thought was permanent. It's spilling out into the world in ways we cannot control.

Like that mustard seed—it keeps growing. Like that bread—it keeps multiplying. Like joy—it keeps showing up where we least expect it. And that's where the fear comes in. Because resurrection is not just comforting, it's disruptive. It doesn't just tell us that everything will be okay someday. It

tells us that something is already happening now— and we may not be in control of it. So how can we trust resurrection... when so much still feels the same? Because resurrection is not just about life after death. It is about what has power. It is about what gets the final word. And the good news is—death *does not* get the final word. Fear does not get the final word. Violence does not get the final word. The empire does not get the final word. Sure, Pontius Pilate is still governor. Herod is still on the “throne.” The systems that crucified Jesus are still in place. And still—the stone is rolled away. Because the good news is more alive than anything that tries to kill it. More alive than fear. More alive than violence. More alive than despair. More alive than that quiet voice that says, “Why bother? Nothing will ever change.”

Listen, kings come and kings go. We may still feel afraid. But God—God is still bringing life out of death. God is still at work in this world—with a power strong enough to shake the earth, and a love tender enough to make a tomb bloom. And here is the other part of the good news: For the women at the tomb, the message is not just, “He is not here.” It’s also, “He is ahead of you.” “Go to Galilee,” Jesus says. Go back to where it all began. Go back to ordinary life—and there, you will see me. Not just in the extraordinary. Not just in moments like this. But in the everyday places. In familiar streets. Around ordinary tables. In conversations and encounters you didn’t plan. The good news is not just that the tomb is empty. It’s that Christ is already out ahead of us.

Already in the world. Already at work. Already alive in places we may not expect.

So as we celebrate Easter, we don't just stand at the edge of an empty tomb, trying to prove that something happened long ago. In fact, we really don't need to do that. We spend way too much time, resources and energy trying to "prove" that which was meant to be received in faith. Here's what we do -- We step out into a world where something is still happening. We go looking for the living Christ—not in places that are sealed and certain, but in places that are still breaking open. In neighbors and strangers. In acts of courage and compassion. In moments of unexpected grace. In every small defiance of despair. Because the good news was never meant to stay in a grave. And it was never meant to stay in a story. It is alive. It is moving. It is already out ahead of us. So do not be afraid. Go—and see. Christ is risen. (*He is risen indeed.*) Amen.