

## Jesus Of Nazareth Is Risen!

Text: Mark 16:1-9

Suggested Hymns:

88, 95, 103, 99, 92

1) An Undeniable Fact

2) An Incomparable Comfort

3) An Inexhaustible source of joy

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Mark 16:1-9, *<sup>1</sup> Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.*

*<sup>2</sup> Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. <sup>3</sup> And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away -- for it was very large.*

*<sup>5</sup> And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup> But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.*

*<sup>7</sup> "But go, tell His disciples -- and Peter -- that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." <sup>8</sup> So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*

*<sup>9</sup> Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

As the sun set on the first Good Friday on Palestine's hills, the people saw a sight the like of which they will never see again: Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, had died on the cross.

The hymnist writes,<sup>1</sup>

O darkest woe!

Ye tears, forth flow!  
Hath earth so sad a wonder?  
God the Father's only Son  
Lieth buried yonder.

That is the despondent wail that floats out upon the evening air of that saddest of all days.

His disciples had trusted that Jesus was to have redeemed Israel, but now all their hopes and expectations are wrapped in His shroud and are entombed in His grave. They mourn and lament.

The Sabbath, the Saturday, the day of rest, glides by. Its solemnity is undisturbed.

As Sunday morning dawns, pious women wend their way to Jesus' sepulchre. They are there to anoint His body with spices and ointments. Their hearts are heavy with sorrow. Jesus, their best Friend, whom they loved above everything else on earth, is dead and buried.

On their way they remember that a large stone has been rolled against the door of the grave to make it secure, and they ask themselves, "*Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?*" a question that perplexed and disturbed them. On coming to the sepulchre, they see with amazement that the stone is rolled away. What does this mean?

They go into the sepulchre, and behold, they see a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment. Fear and consternation seizes them. They would gladly flee, but the young man says to them, "*Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.*" <sup>7</sup> "*But go, tell His disciples -- and Peter -- that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.*"

These are the Easter tidings that God has sent to man! Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is risen! And this shall be our theme today. *Jesus of Nazareth is Risen!* May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. Jesus Of Nazareth Is Risen! An Undeniable Fact**

The record given by the Evangelists shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus of Nazareth is risen from the dead. Our whole Gospel for this Sunday is a proof for His resurrection. The women went to the grave to find the body of Jesus. It was not there. The place where Jesus had lain was empty. The linen clothes in which He had been wrapped and the napkin that had been about His head were lying there; that is all. Jesus Himself had risen.

His resurrection is proved by two angels of light. An angel asks the frightened women, as we read in Luke 24:5-7, ***“Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> “He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> “saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words.***

Here the heavenly messenger points to Christ’s own words as a proof that He will rise on the third day.

Even the dead are a proof that Christ is alive. When Jesus died on the cross, the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after His resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many.<sup>2</sup>

The living, too, are a proof of His resurrection. His friends declare that Jesus is risen. Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, who came to anoint His body, do not find Him in the tomb. The stone is rolled from the entrance. They see the grave empty. Beside the linen and the napkin they notice nothing. Then they hear from the angel what has come to pass, and are sent to tell His disciples.

In vain, people say that His body was stolen from the sepulchre. His enemies did not steal Jesus, because they placed a guard at His grave to make sure that no one entered.

His friends did not steal him — they were too scared — and had they done it, these women would not have come to the grave and the angel would not have sent them to His disciples to tell them what had happened, for they would have known it.

What, then, became of Jesus' body? The angel tells us. Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is risen! He lives, who once was dead.

His very enemies, who would not have it true, are a proof for this. When the women were gone from the grave, some of the guards went to the city to tell the chief priests the things that happened. They come together with the elders, and what do they do?

They gave to the soldiers who were watching over the grave *a large sum of money ...*,<sup>13</sup> saying, *"Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'*"<sup>14</sup> *"And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure."*<sup>15</sup> *So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.*

They bribe them to spread a falsehood. Had it been the truth, why should they give them money to tell the truth? And what a clumsy lie it was! Say, *'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'* How could they know this if they were asleep? Their story wears the stamp of a lie on its face, thereby proving all the more and all the stronger that Jesus is risen.

The priests' money, spent for the purpose of hushing the truth, proclaims all the louder the great event that Jesus is alive.

Aside from this, Jesus, after His resurrection, appears to Mary Magdalene, to Peter, to the eleven disciples several times, to Thomas curing him of his unbelief, and to 500 brethren at once, of whom the greater part were still alive when the Epistles were written.

Will people say that all these people were deceived? Certainly not, for the fact remains beyond dispute: Jesus is risen from the dead according to the Scriptures! As sure as Jesus died to fulfil what was written, so sure also Jesus rose again to fulfil what He had foretold.

Thus His prediction was fulfilled, as written in Mark 8:31, *that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.* This event, His resurrection, plainly foretold, is fulfilled. *Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.*

The hymnist writes,<sup>3</sup>

Lives again our glorious king:  
Where, O death, is now thy sting?  
Dying once, He all doth save:  
Where thy victory, O grave?

Christ's resurrection is an undeniable fact!

## **2. Jesus Of Nazareth Is Risen! An Incomparable Comfort**

The angel sends the women with the Easter message to His disciples and Peter. Oh, His poor disciples! They were in need of a comforting message such as this.

On the night in which Jesus was betrayed they had promised Him faithfulness unto death; they would stand by Him. But when the enemy came, they forsook Him and fled. They had heard, too, what had happened to Jesus; His scourging, mocking, crucifying, and His death.

And deep sorrow harassed their hearts and racked their souls. Jesus, who was their One and All, was dead and laid in the grave. O bitter woe! O horrid pain! Where was there comfort for these disciples? Could His suffering, His death console them? No; it just increased their sorrow. Had He remained in death, how should they know whether He was their Redeemer, their Saviour, and whether their sins were forgiven? They would have never known it.

But here the angel sends the message: <sup>7</sup> ***“But go, tell His disciples -- and Peter -- that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”*** That was comfort, a sweet comfort, an incomparable comfort to their sorrowing hearts.

Especially one disciple had more need of it than the others. Peter, poor Peter. Alas, what had he done? In a strong moment he had boasted that ***“Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”***<sup>4</sup> And ***“Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!”***<sup>5</sup>

Peter follows His Master to the high priest's palace. ***A servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”*** <sup>70</sup> ***But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”*** <sup>71</sup> ***And when he had***

*gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." <sup>72</sup> But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" <sup>73</sup> And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." <sup>74</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.<sup>6</sup>*

And Peter, realising his Master's word "*Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.*" *So he went out and wept bitterly.*" This was a terrible sin that Peter had committed. What should he do? His Master is condemned to death, dies, and is buried. "*Is my sin forgiven? How can I know? Who will tell me? Jesus is dead!*"

Distress, agony, remorse, gloom, sadness, misery stare him in the face. Judas, who had betrayed his Master, seeing what he had done, despairs and hangs himself. Peter, having committed a similar sin, feels the same agony!

But to him is brought the comforting news, Jesus is risen from the dead! And these glad tidings give joy to his soul, peace to his troubled mind, and comfort to his bleeding heart.

What was the case with the disciples and Peter is the case with all Christians. How could we know whether we truly have forgiveness of our sins in Christ Jesus, had He not risen from the dead?

His grave could not have told us. It could only assert, "*Here lies He that died for others, but whether His death is satisfactory to God and whether your sins are fully paid for, I cannot say. He has failed to overcome death, hell, and the devil, for the grim foe still holds Him in his clasp.*" That is what the grave would have said.

But we have comfort! His grave is empty. Jesus is no longer in it. He is risen. The Crucified One is alive.

The hymnist writes,<sup>7</sup>

I know that my Redeemer lives.  
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
He lives, He lives, who once was dead,  
He lives, my ever-living Head!

Look at the sweet fruits of His resurrection. *“He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification.”*<sup>8</sup> Our sins cast Jesus into death’s arms, but He broke away from those arms to tell us that we are justified. His resurrection declares that He has fully paid for all our sins and that we are pronounced free, just, and righteous before God. All of this is received through faith in Jesus Christ.

In the resurrection of Christ our faith has a solid foundation. *“If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”*<sup>9</sup> but we know from the Scriptures and by many proofs that *“Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”*<sup>10</sup>

Jesus is alive, He lives, and our faith is not vain. Our faith is full of meaning, having the hope not only of this life, but also of that which is to come, for we believe in a living Saviour who has passed through the dark valley of death and is now exalted on high. O blessed truth! O sure comfort!

By His resurrection Jesus declares that He has overthrown the rule of Satan. Satan is now conquered, his head is crushed, and we can withstand his temptations. Death, a weapon of his, is wrested from his hands. Death’s shackles hold the human race, but Christ bursts them asunder and thereby proves that *“death is swallowed up in victory.”*<sup>11</sup> *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?”* Christ is risen! The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered! This is an incomparable comfort!

### **3. Jesus Of Nazareth Is Risen! An Inexhaustible Source Of Joy**

Go, look at that grave, it is empty. Jesus who lay there to moulder away to dust did not see corruption, but is alive. Why mourn and weep?

The women, seeing what has happened, go quickly out of the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and they hasten to bring the joyous message to the disciples.

They are filled with fear because of the angel, but they are overjoyed at the message; Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is risen. Sad and downcast they went to the sepulchre, for they mourned the loss of their greatest Friend. But joyful, happy, and glad they return. The message was so great, they could not but rejoice.

Now they knew that Jesus truly is their Saviour; now they knew that Jesus who had done so much for them before His death would also continue to bestow His blessings upon them. He had been their Stay and Staff, their Hope and Life, and now He lives to be it forever!

How do the Easter tidings affect you? Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified for your sins on Calvary, is risen from the dead. He is not in the grave. See the place where they laid Him! This is the message that God sends to you by His angel.

Oh, let it be to you an undeniable fact, an incomparable comfort, and an inexhaustible source of joy. See, Jesus lives to prove that He is your Redeemer. He lives to convince you that He saves His people from their sins. He lives to bless you with His salvation. He lives to silence all your fears. He lives to plead for you in heaven. He lives your Prophet, Priest, and King.

Let us conclude with the words of the hymnist,<sup>12</sup>

He lives, all glory to His name!  
He lives, my Jesus, still the same;  
O the sweet joy this sentence gives:  
I know that my Redeemer lives!  
Halleluiah! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymn 63

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 27:52

<sup>3</sup> Hymn 92

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 26:33

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 26:35

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 26:69-74

<sup>7</sup> Hymn 103

<sup>8</sup> Romans 4:25

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:17

<sup>10</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:54

<sup>12</sup> Hymn 103