**Matthew 28:1-10 (ESV)**

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. [2] 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. [5] But the angel said to the women, "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. [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." [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."

**“The Miracle of Easter”**

Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed, Alleluia! The miracles at the cross on Good Friday have yielded up the miracle of Easter. It is one victory, one triumph, one Savior and Lord sent from the Father in heaven. Certainly, sin, death, and the Devil have tried to silence this good news. During Holy Week, the debt crisis made money appear more important than the richness paid by Christ’s sacrifice for sinners. On Good Friday, the celebration of Earth Day made caring for the world appear more precious than God’s love for the world by the cross. Even Easter Sunday has to deal with the news and fame of a royal wedding appearing more glorious than the crowning victory made by Jesus Christ.

All of this is a trick, an illusion, a deception away from the eminent truth that God has won. From the earliest times, Christians witnessed to this miracle of Easter. They partly did so by later concluding the Lord’s Prayer with words we still say, “For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen.” Here is a doxology or glorious words directing attention to the empty tomb and to Jesus as God’s Son and our Savior. As one person states,

“The simple fact that the Christian fellowship, founded on belief in Jesus’ resurrection, came into existence and flourished in the very city where he was executed and buried is powerful evidence for the historicity of the empty tomb” (The New Evidence, 243)

What is the debt paid for sinners? Who has loved this corrupt world? Where is the beauty of royalty? The miracle of Easter has come in Jesus Christ for His kingdom, power and glory is forever and ever.

Too many obstacles seem to get in the way of the Gospel. It is why God is already at work removing them. Whether a giant stone at the tomb or some guards standing watch. An angel of the Lord came to remove what stood in the way of the women. They had faced enough by being so close to the suffering and dying Jesus on Good Friday. Their hearts were broken and lives barren. Yet, before their arrival, God was changing the scene. Similar to the cross, an earthquake noted the presence of heavenly hands at work. The stone at the tomb needed moving so the women would have a different picture. In the same manner, the guards moved out of the way from fear to become like dead men. A new kingdom comes at the miracle of Easter for women caught in sadness and hopelessness.

Only those who face the reality of the cross are aware of the obstacles. We must never forget the sealed tomb and roman soldiers were a comfort to some. It was a picture perfect moment that many would like keep around even today. However, no matter what sinful man wants or the kingdoms of this world have for glory. God is already removing what stands in the way of His Gospel. As the Psalmist declares,

“O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more” (Psalm 10:17-18).

The miracle of Easter means God deliberately acts to change the picture among lands and peoples. Jesus has paid the price for sinners. A new kingdom has come into this world by His death and resurrection. The Church is ready for those troubled by sin, trapped in death, and unable to see any sign of salvation.

The obstacles were removed but it was only so the Word of God would have its place. Unlike the secure guards. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.” It is always an invitation when revealing the victory of Jesus. The women were filled with words of life by the preached Gospel. It was not a feeling or from seeing an angel but founded upon what Jesus had already said about His resurrection. Just as the scene at the tomb had changed so did the women’s attitudes change by God’s Word working on them. Their emptiness and fear had no place. Death and the Devil had no power. As Jesus promised before His suffering and death, “So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (John 16:22). The tomb of Christ brought forth life again as the women went off forgiven and free to tell the disciples. It came from the angel’s promising Gospel message, “See, I have told you.”

God’s Word is what gives faith and life in the risen Jesus. His victory swallows up what we fear from the powers of sin, death, and the Devil. Of course, it is hard for humanity to give up on works, especially when we look at a dying world. The drive for works to save is what kills sinner. Strangely enough, the mighty St. Paul and faithful worker noted the Lord Jesus saying to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Everyone is weak at Easter accept one risen Jesus. His power works by the Word to forgive, restore, and deliver powerless people from their fears. As the early church Father St. John Chrysostom declares,

“Let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shone forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior’s death has set us free” (Treasury of Daily Prayer, 183-184).

The only way to leave the tomb is to listen. God’s Word preaches good news to the poor. It has the power to cast out fear and give faith since Jesus is risen as the savior.

Nothing hindered the women from leaving the tomb. They had the Word of God as preached by the angel and evidence of the tomb being empty. Yet, how compassionately does God’s Son looks upon those he has redeemed. There was still fear among their great joy and the risen savior showed them a greater reason to rejoice. St. Matthew said, “And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." Jesus greets us with this welcome when we have the Sacrament. His word of greeting is more than a “howdy.” It is a declaration of His glory that has conquered all things. His greeting is more like saying, “Rejoice.” Here He is the crucified and risen Savior under bread and wine by the promise of His Word. Dietrich Bonhoeffer states, “In a thousand ways people today ask, where can we find joy? Church of Christ, you alone know the answer; say it out loud: Christ, my joy” (A little book on joy 151). The encouragement to the women echoes throughout the ages, “Do not be afraid go and tell.” The miracle of Easter has come in Jesus Christ for His kingdom, power and glory is forever and ever. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia.