

# Jesus Is the Winner!

*He is inviting everyone to share in His victory!*

Saturday, 1/4 at 4:00 | Sunday, 1/5 at 9:00

Second Sunday after Christmas – 2020

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: **He Is Risen!** (He Is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!) Against all odds, **JESUS IS THE WINNER over sin, death, and the devil!!!**

- ➔ Jesus' earthly life began without sin – *as the Son of God put on human flesh by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:35)!*
- ➔ Jesus' was tempted in many and various ways by countless people, *even by the devil himself*, yet He never fell into sin!
- ➔ Jesus permitted Himself to be ♦arrested, ♦mocked, ♦brutally beaten, and ♦crucified; then ♦Jesus received our sins and our punishment; then, *when Jesus' work was all finished*, ♦He laid down His life; then, *on the first Easter Sunday – sometime after the first star appeared in the sky on our Saturday evening*, God the Father raised Jesus from death to life! **He Is Risen!** (He Is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!) **JESUS IS THE WINNER!!**

The sermon text is today's Gospel reading, *which focuses on the events on that first Easter Sunday morning...*

1. **Very Early in the Morning:** <sup>1</sup> **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. //**

So ✦*after Saturday* and ✦*shortly before the sun rose on that first Easter Sunday* (which was about 6:15), a number of women came to the tomb to finish preparing Jesus' dead body. Considering ✦*when the body had been placed in the tomb* and ✦*the occurrence of the Sabbath Day*, *this was their first opportunity*. Try to imagine how they felt as they walked to the tomb... They must have been filled with ✦*sadness – Jesus was dead*, ✦*disappointment – Jesus seemed to be the loser*, and ✦*fear – as they thought they would encounter His decomposing body*.

## 2. **An Awesome Angel Appearance:**

- a. **Before he appeared, the tomb was secured:** “...the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate [on Holy Saturday] and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead, and the last fraud will be worse than the first.’” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard” (Matt. 27:62-66 ESV).
- b. **Before he appeared, Jesus was raised:** God the Father raised the lifeless body of Jesus from the dead! *As that fact brings **great joy to believers**, so it also brings **great terror to unbelievers!***
  - i. **Why was Jesus raised?** *Because He had successfully completed His saving work to ✦remove the sin of the world, and ✦restore the relationship between God and people!*

ii. When? Sometime between the appearance of the first star, *which marked the end of the Sabbath Day*, and the appearance of the angel.

c. When he appeared: **<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.**

i. The event was awesome: *A great earthquake!*

ii. His appearance was awesome: *Like lightning!*

iii. His mission was important: *To remove the stone and reveal the empty tomb!*

iv. The response of the guards was extreme: *They were – in a sense – scared to death!*

3. **Amazing News:** **<sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> 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.” // What are angels? They are Messengers!** So God the Father in heaven told an angel: “Women are on their way to the tomb; therefore...

a. Go down there and roll away the stone!

b. Tell the women **He has risen!**

c. Show them that the tomb is empty!

d. Tell them to quickly communicate two things to Jesus’ disciples:

i. **He has risen from the dead!**

ii. He will see you in Galilee!

#### 4. **An Amazing Encounter:**

- a. <sup>8</sup> **So [the women] departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell [Jesus'] disciples.** // They had **fear** – *being in the presence of a holy angel*, but also **joy** – **He Is Risen!**
- b. <sup>9</sup> **And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.** // Right away, *they recognized Jesus and were so glad to see Him!*
- c. <sup>10</sup> **Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”** // Think about Jesus calling His disciples “**brothers**”! ♦ They all fled from Him in Gethsemane, ♦ Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, and ♦ none were with Him when He died – except John; nevertheless, Jesus called them “**brothers**”! Jesus was saying to them through the women, **I FORGIVE YOU!** *That was good news for them and for us!* Jesus took away our sins AND – *through our God-given trust in Jesus* – **WE HAVE GOD’S FORGIVENESS!**

**Let Us Pray:** Dearest Jesus, You are the Winner, and, *amazingly*, You share Your victory with us! Help us to ♦ ever rejoice in You and ♦ tell others that YOU ARE THE WINNER!!

**This Week’s Challenge:** Share a recent sermon or a brochure with someone who does not yet know Jesus as Savior!

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