

Matthew 28:1-10
April 5, 2026

Such Things

The experience of earthly life is a combination of high hopes and the beatific on the one hand, and disappointment, struggle, decay, and finally death, on the other. Even when one is young and at the highest reach of their strength and beauty and their intelligence, there is a shadow cast over us that not only presages the eventual decline, but informs us that even in youth, strength, beauty, intelligence, we are vulnerable.

Easter Sunday presents the former as the greater reality. It does not claim that because of Christ we who believe will not know decline and aging and death, rather obviously, it would be mistaken if it did. Rather it tells us of the victory of everlasting life. The term is resurrection, which literally means, “to get up again,” and its most easily understood analogy is getting up in the morning after a night’s sleep.

In the larger sense, it means that decay and death and the anxiety that comes with them, as well as Sin and its anxiety, have no hold over us, that because of the resurrection of Jesus, *we shall all know resurrection*, the magnificent victory of life over death and its companions.

Though the four gospels differ slightly in their accounts, they tell a simple story; that on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and some of the women went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid on the

previous Friday after he had been taken down from the cross. They intended to make sure his body had been prepared for burial.

They found the tomb open, and inside there was an angel, but no Jesus. In Matthew’s version, as it has been read in our presence, the angel told them that Jesus had arisen, that they should go tell the others, and that they should go to Galilee, where for many of them the story began, and that he would meet them there.

On their way, in obedience to the angel, they ran into Jesus. He told them not to be afraid and to keep to the angel’s instructions. Presumably they did. It is my conviction that they did not entirely understand the significance of his raising. I doubt anyone ever has. I doubt we do now. It is with humility that we speak of it.

But never mind about that. There is time for a fuller understanding later. It is enough that we know that he is alive, and has ascended into heaven, and that the Spirit of Christ reigns in our hearts.

The first reaction is, of course, astonishment and joy; a joy so profound that words are unable to convey it. That is why art and music are recruited for the task and are necessary to Easter expressions. It is more magnificently sung than told, and sometimes painted and sculpted.

Anyone who has ever been serendipitously surprised will have caught a glimpse of its power and majesty, even if it is only a glimpse. A glimpse is all that we can handle and all that is needed to help us make it through.

Let us not dismiss the glimpses we see. In addition to getting up in the morning, the most obvious analogy, is the cycle of nature in springtime, when the leaves come out and the grass turns green and the flowers begin to bloom and it is warmer outside. The life that has gone dormant for the winter blesses us once again with its, “little resurrection.”

One cannot help but to think of the Dogwood trees with their cross-shaped flowers and wound-colored centers, combining the pain of the cross and the beauty of the resurrection.

There are other many things as well. This is the time to think of the things gone right; reconciliations and healings; broken things fixed and opportunities seized; dreams fulfilled and new hopes envisioned. They are all, “little resurrections,” pointing us to the Great Resurrection with its victory of light and life over darkness and death; of goodness and love over evil and hate.

Our life in the world can overwhelm us with the daily tasks of life and the thoughts of the other side of experience, *but this is Easter*, the season of the year when we celebrate the victory which is true all the year round, which is the eternal victory of God’s grace;

the grace that created the world and the grace that redeems it; the grace that proclaims righteousness and the grace that forgives sin; the grace that heals diseases and the grace that sets captives free; the grace that adorns this world with beauty and with fulfilling experiences beyond measure that rise above the disappointments and failures and stumbling blocks along the way.

This grace inspired Paul to speak of our present sufferings as, “not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us;” and of, “light and momentary afflictions,” as, “achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

And he was not just being sentimental, for his sufferings were substantial. We would simply not accept that testimony from someone that had not been around the block a few times in this world. Not only he, but Jesus as well, had seen their share of trouble. And this grace inspired Paul to instruct the Philippians with these words, after he had written of the peace that surpasses understanding;

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about *such things*.”

Today is the day, this is the season, in view of Christ’s Resurrection, to set our minds on things above; to think about such things as these.

Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Matthew 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Luke 24:1-12

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified

and on the third day be raised again.’ ” 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

John:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not

understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

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