

SERMON

Pastor James Bauman

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bartlett, Illinois

Resurrection of Our Lord - April 5, 2026

Job 18:23-27 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Mathew 28:1-10

In the Name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

“This is the day which **the Lord has made**. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

- Psalm 118

The Easter accounts are familiar to most of us.

So familiar to Christians that the **words** can just fly past us

- like those of some talking head on our TV's

- trying to have a news program on a light news day.

- and attempting to make news of what we have already heard.

So lets try to imagine the **emotions** involved there at the tomb.

The women were, emotionally, **completely** exhausted--

- empty of any energy stored inside.

They had seen their beloved master

- CRUELLY, heartlessly, TORTURED TO DEATH.

- And in the case of **Mary**, her beloved son,

- He was the son who was once a **very** special baby--

- visited by shepherds who had heard His birth announced by angels,

- and then very important Wise Men from the East, KINGLY types,

- led by a special star.

When He had visited the Temple at about 12,

- He was recognized as a very special young man

- as He asked and answered questions.

- He called that grand Temple His Father's house.

Then when He began his public ministry,

- He began attracting huge crowds following Him

- and healed cripples and brought sight to the blind

- and associated with sinners--

- and changed them as the Friend of Sinners--

- and even raising His dear friend Lazareth from the dead.

How could what had happened **now** ever be even comprehended

- let alone understood.

Yet these exhausted women rose up early this morning

- for a very sad walk to the tomb,

- carrying their spices,

- to anoint those tortured remains.

- in a traditional, respectful way.

“Total exhaustion” really doesn't begin to describe

- the feelings of those women....

What a time to meet an angel!,,,,

But the BODY of their beloved Jesus was missing from that open tomb--

- the tomb which had been so carefully closed and sealed--

- the PRECIOUS body that even the Roman guards feared might be stolen,

- and had been sent to prevent that from happening....

- Had THEY failed?....

It was all too much.

If ever there would be a time just to faint, that would be it....

If you were last here on Maundy Thursday or Good Friday,

- you will know that we left the church dark and barren--

- no Altar or Pulpit hangings,

- no candles in the usual places,

- the cross and processional cross veiled in black.

When you arrived here at church this morning,

- The lights were on.

- If you came early, breakfast had been prepared.

Today there are candles

- and joyful gold Altar and Pulpit hangings.

- A bright white drapes the cross.

- And lots of lilies, -

- flowers that Jesus pointed to in His teaching

- to remind us of God's lavish dependable care.
- Lilies which on this day
- represent trumpets
- like our young friend Bennett is playing,
- proclaiming the resurrection
- just as the flowers themselves
- sprout forth from a dead-looking bulb buried in the earth.

BUT SOMEONE WAS HERE BEFORE US!

- And that's the way it happened on the first Easter.

The women arose very early

- to go to what they had **last** seen as a dark and barren place--
- to that fresh tomb hewn out of rock near the cross--.
- and they had NO REAL EXLPECTION AT ALL
- that things would be different
- from when they had left there.

They even expected to have trouble getting in the door.,

- because of the size of that stone.

They had brought spices-to anoint the DEAD body.

They had set out to do what they felt they **had** to do,

- a duty,

- as sad as that made them...

- Their hearts were as dark and barren as that tomb...

Can you or I even **imagine** the depths of their grief and hurting?

But it had seemed right for them to DO SOMETHING-- however small.

Yet EVEN THAT plan just to anoint

- the dead, corpse of Jesus

- was problematic.

- Who would roll away that big, heavy stone?,

- they had wondered.

The women did their best to prepare for the day,

- under the circumstances.

But GOD made this day for them.

- Easter is GOD'S day.

- He was there before them.

“This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvelous in our eyes.”

We have made our own preparations for this day--

- maybe getting up early as they did,

- maybe buying food for an Easter meal,

- or making arrangements to go to the relatives,

- or to a restaurant,

- maybe putting on our best clothes
- or even buying some new ones--

But what were YOU expecting to find?

I know you expected the church to be open and decorated.

But did you wonder about

- how some big stone might keep you from seeing Jesus?
- Has the door of your heart ever been sort of locked and sealed
- like some vault in a grave.

Have any of us come

- expecting to find some stone placed on our hearts IN THE PAST
- still standing in the way
- of our seeing Jesus?

Maybe because someone here has

- just seen too much
- and felt too much pain
- to expect really much of anything today?....

Or maybe SOMEONE is feeling some deep spiritual confusion

- because she or he is feeling the effects of a betrayal
- of the Friend of Sinners which that person made--
- so there is a need to avoid any thought that He is really alive,

- to meet with and to talk.

Maybe YOU are that Someone....

Whether you may be or not,

- what WERE YOUR preparations?

Have we all come today expecting to find Jesus alive--

- or are any of us here

- more as a gesture of respect for past memories,

- or possibly because it's just "the thing to do" today in the family?

Have any of us come

- with the haunting, deadening suspicion

- that talk of His resurrection

- just could not possibly be true?

Harboring the same thought His first disciples had?

- Are there some spices for anointing the dead

- among any of OUR preparations?

- Any spices of doubts,

- or of sins we plan to keep in our lives

- even though they could not possibly remain

- in the company of a living Jesus?

However you have come...

- however large the stone you expected to find,
- however secure the seal on your heart's door seems to be,
- whatever preparations you have made to make the best of this day,

KNOW THAT GOD HIMSELF WAS HERE BEFORE YOU.

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

The RISEN Lord Jesus Christ does not need

- OUR acts of sentimentality today
- to make His living Presence real.
- No need even for flowers or special music
- No need for last respects as though He were dead.

He IS RISEN!

And the Risen Lord Jesus has also gone on before you and me...

- And there in our future we will see Him
- as the very first disciples did--
- meeting us on the road,
- showing us Himself in the Scriptures
- and in the breaking of the bread,
- walking right through doors locked tight in fear.

He will meet us there in OUR Galilee.

YOU will see Him, as He told you.

But please don't put aside the words from God's own angel-messengers,

- as though it is only for church--

- or maybe for when someone dies.

It is for ALL of life-- and truly FOR YOU

- NO MATTER HOW YOU CAME TODAY,

- WITH WHATEVER PREPARATIONS

- AND WHATEVER THE HARD FACTS

- WHICH TROUBLE YOU

- AND WHICH **YOUR** PREPARATIONS may REVEAL.

HE IS RISEN, .

- And the veil of death is lifted from all ALL OF LIFE,

- including whatever it is that deadens your spirit and soul.

- Now the future is FULL and UNENDING, FOR YOU.

And that message changes EVERYTHING, ALREADY NOW.

- THIS DAY can never be just filed away

- in some mental file marked "religion".

The Lord who broke out of the sealed dark tomb

- will not be trapped by such categories of human making.

So please do not think you can keep the angel's thrilling message

- hidden somewhere in your purse or pocket

- when you leave today--
- as we sometimes do with the Sunday bulletin--
- like some passing experience that can be forgotten
- with no further meaning.

Above all, be sure that you understand

- that the angel's life-changing message **IS truly also FOR YOU**
- not just for someone "more religious"
- or maybe less sinful.

In the words of Jesus Himself,

"For God so loved that **world** that He gave His only-begotten Son, that **EVERYONE** who believes in Him may not perish, but have **EVERLASTING LIFE.**"- John 3:16

And,

"**WHOEVER** comes to me I will never cast out." - John 6:37

That means Jesus Christ

- died and rose again **FOR YOU TOO, PERIOD.**

Now nothing you do for Him will ever be futile,

And dreams that are united with Him are safe,

And your life in this world can be abundant,

- filled with confidence and hope and love and joy and peace.
- in absolutely every circumstance,

- even in the midst of those hard facts
- that would try to put to death your faith.

AND THAT PROMISE OF EVERLASTING LIFE MEANS

- you can be sure that there is always something more
- than you have yet seen--
- new mercies, new surprises, new reason to go on.

Not because of how you or I came today.

But because of who was here before us--

- because this is truly the day the Lord has made--
- because **God** has rolled away the stone,
- **AND CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED--**
- **FOR US ALL!**

- Including... **YOU**. Amen.