

## **“Some Morning”**

The Resurrection of Jesus

Easter Sunrise 2014

April 20, 2014

Luke 24:1-12

*24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in, they did not find the body.[a] 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5 The women[b] were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men[c] said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.[d] 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.[e] Early dawn, this time in fact, on the first day of the week after the Sabbath had ended. Joseph of Arimathea had asked and probably begged for Jesus’ body so that it could be buried before nightfall on Friday. Because while the Romans had no consideration for those killed by crucifixion and often left the bodies for days at a time the Jewish tradition would not allow it. So Jesus’ body was hastily taken down and given as much respect as possible before being laid in the new tomb because there could be no work on the Sabbath.*

Jesus had been laid to rest in the tomb so why then would the women come back to disturb the body? However to understand why the women are there we have to understand a bit more about the traditions of Jewish burial. There are three stages: the preparation, the ritualistic cleansing, and the shrouding. Until a body undergoes these stages they are not really buried, so while Jesus was dead scripture tells us and what our historical context explains is that although he was laid in the tomb the rest of the burial process was not done. It was probably executed so quickly they could only give him as much respect as possible by covering his body. So these women on this morning were going to finish preparing the body for true interment.

Jewish law was strict, no work could be done on the Sabbath which began at Sundown on Friday evening and lasted until the stars appear Saturday night by which point it would have been too late to approach the tomb. Remember they did not have flashlights or four wheel drive. So early morning on Sunday morning at first light they make their way to being the mourning process. Jesus had just died and they could do nothing to stop it. Remember he was born to die so that we might live. But these women still mourned his passing and wished to honor him in the ways they could by properly preparing his body.

I am sure there were many tears on the walk to the tomb, moments of devastation, and moments of grief so profound they could not move forward it was enough to just make it to the tomb let alone begin on the sorry task that the entire time they must have been gearing themselves up to doing. So they get there, and imagine the surprise, the utter dismay to see the stone rolled away even with the guards there. They did not know what they would find as they walked in and feared the worst but instead they met two men in shining white garments and were asked this question “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” Some mourning time huh? They barely had a moment to mourn their Savior’s death to process that he was truly gone before needing to reprocess and accept that he was not there and in fact according to these two men he was not dead at all.

They had been asked a question and today we can ask ourselves that same question why do we seek the living Christ among the dead things in our world? Our world is messed up, crazy, chaotic, filled with all sorts of negative things and ways of thinking and being. We can barely fit our Sabbath into an hour or two on Sunday morning let alone show the devotion of sunset to sunset. We do not live in the same context as these women but we continue to look for Christ in the dead things that we surround ourselves with; things like our perfect Easter Outfit, our shoe collections, our tool

collections, the number and type of cars we drive, how big our homes are, how big our bank accounts are. We continue to seek Christ in everything else but where we should be looking. We like the women seek Christ amongst the dead instead we should seek to find Christ amongst the living word, our communities of faith, our churches, and amongst the people who live their lives following the way, the truth, and the life. Pray with me.

Gracious most loving God, help us to seek you amongst the living, help us to bury what needs to be taken out of lives so that we can continue our faithful living out of our love for you. Be with us as we celebrate our Risen Savior. He is among the living. Amen!