

SERMONS FOR EASTER SUNDAY

GUIDED
to the
CROSS

**GUIDED TO
NEW LIFE**



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SERMON

- The **Sermon** is delivered by the pastor:

¶ Grace, mercy and peace to you, my dear Christian friends. Today, we celebrate Easter, the day of resurrection of our Lord. Today, we remember where we have been, focused as we have been these last many weeks of Lent on the cross of Christ. But we also take a turn now past the cross and go to the open tomb where Jesus arose to give us new life.

Easter is celebrated in the spring every year and not by mistake. It arrives at a time when flowers are blooming, grass is growing, trees are budding. New life is sprouting up in nature all around us. And new life is sprouting up in us spiritually this day because Christ has risen to new life for us.

We are forgiven by Christ; we are renewed in our love for God; we are refreshed with the sure hope that we, too, will rise one day, as Jesus has today, to join him in heaven, where new life will spring forth eternally for us all.

The turning from the death of the cross to the life of the open tomb is depicted in the Bible when it says that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb on Easter morning “while it was still dark” (John 20:1). We, as the people of God, are moving “out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

What does new life look like for the women at the tomb? As the Bible tells us, it is earth-shaking. There was an earthquake at the tomb. It is powerful. The heavy stone at the entrance to the grave is easily rolled away. It connects heaven to earth. An angel appear before them to tell them that Jesus is risen. New life is a little scary at first for the women, but the angel assures them that they should not be afraid. The risen Jesus himself stands in the midst of the women, newly alive, and their initial response is to take hold of him and worship him.

What does our new life in Christ look like guided by what happened on that first Easter? As people guided by Easter, we are a people filled with the light of the Lord. We are people whose foundation is rock-solidly based on the death and resurrection of Jesus. We are a people who are no longer afraid of the future because we know the future belongs to Jesus. We are a people who reach out to be with Jesus and who seek to hold on to him to help us in our lives. We are a people who worship and praise our Savior for the life he now gives us to lead. We, like the women at the tomb, are compelled to go forth and tell people that Jesus is alive, and he is alive in each one of us.

Easter energy makes it possible for us to greet each new day with confidence that the Jesus who went to the cross and grave for us will guide us on to witness to others about what we have seen and heard and experienced regarding our living Lord so that they can see, hear and experience Jesus too.

Jesus continues to guide us in this new life we lead. He takes us to places where sadness and hardship reign that we may spread joy and gladness in him. He leads us to places of anger and hostility to bring about peace and harmony. He sends us to lonely forsaken and forgotten places to fill them with his presence and his great love for all.

The journey of life as a Easter person never remains in the past but always looks forward to better times on the horizon. When hard times come in the meantime, we are then able to look beyond the trouble to see the triumph of heaven. Nothing on this earth can take us away from the paradise that awaits us. Jesus makes it very apparent to his disciples about where their thoughts should be centered. "Let not your hearts be troubled," he says. "Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:1-3). Jesus lays it out for us in these words. Don't look down. Look up. Keep in mind the glorious end goal of life together with him forever.

Living new life in Christ awakens us to glimpses of the promises that await us. We see the hand of God at work in our relationships with fellow believers that we might focus more on our common faith together. We notice the blessings of random acts of kindness that point to the Father's deep and lasting love for us. We feel the strength from Jesus to persevere in difficult days. We recognize when people smile and laugh and find joy in the moment. We have peace of