

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle
Easter Sunday
24 April 2011
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita
Matthew 28:1-10

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

Christ is Risen! (*He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!*)

But Mary and the other Mary didn't know it at first.
They came to the tomb just to see it—
to cry and mourn and weep over their dead Lord.

They still couldn't believe He had died—
it was so cruel and so unfair.
He was innocent, but they killed Him nevertheless—
how did they let that happen?

They stayed up at night wondering what they could've done to prevent this,
maybe if they had interrupted the court proceedings—
maybe if they had prayed harder,
or told more people about how good and gentle He actually is—
maybe they could've changed the Pharisees and the chief priests' minds?

They could've done something.
But instead they came to weep.
They mourned over their sin,
their shame,
their guilt—everyone had a part in it.

But when they got to the tomb it was different than yesterday,
the stone was rolled away,
and an Angel, sitting up on top, said to them,
**“Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.
He is not here, He is risen!”** (Mt 28:5-6)

The tomb's empty.
The grave is barren.
The linens that wrapped His lifeless body were neatly folded and laying down.
Death has given way to life.
Lent is over—
Alleluia!

No more fasting!
No more giving up sweets or coffee, TV or Facebook!
No more restraint or silent alleluias—
let them ring out!

For Christ our Lord is risen, He's risen indeed, alleluia!

And there's no greater joy than the empty tomb.

Death was too weak for this Jesus.

Satan tried to keep Him all locked up, buried, with a large stone in front—
but nothing could hold this Christ down!

Not the ground, not the tomb, not death, neither the gates of hell, nor anything else!

Christ is risen!

Alleluia!

And what is most amazing and surprising about the risen Lord,

is that He's not angry.

That's how you know He's not like us.

When we get pounded on, abused, beaten, crushed, humiliated, and crucified—
then we vow to get even.

We say under our embarrassed breath,

“Paybacks are hell!”

We get even, we plot and scheme and come up with the best way to make them pay.

We want them to pay for what they've done.

But not our Lord.

He rises from the dead and is not angry.

He has no thought of “getting back” at anyone—

not Judas,

not Pilate,

not the Chief Priests, or the scribes, or the Pharisees,

and not you or me.

He's not angry, He has no wrath.

And so He has no desire to get even.

No, He likes how unfair it all is.

He likes doing all the work,

suffering all the pain,

and paying all the price of redemption.

He does it freely, joyfully, and all for us.

The risen Lord Jesus Christ loves you.

And He didn't come back from death to get even with you,

but to bless you, to heal you, and to take your fear away.

You no longer need to fear.

You don't need to fear rejection or lowliness,
 pain, sorrow, or death.
 They can't hurt you anymore.

The sting of death is removed,
 the grave and the large stone can't stay shut,
 Satan is defeated, the battle is done,
 Christ is risen,
Alleluia!

And all is done for you.

You are forgiven,
 death is defeated,
 and now because Christ rises and lives so you also rise and live.

Do not fear, O Christian,
 but rejoice!

Your struggles in this life,
 your shame and guilt,
 your anger and bitterness,
 your falling away from the faith and your embarrassment for not asking for help,
 all of this is forgiven,
 it's removed,
 it's been buried in the tomb and is no more.

But Christ, who is your life,
 is risen.

And with Him, you also.

So rejoice!

Rejoice in this risen Lord, Jesus Christ.
 Rejoice that your sin was paid for by another,
 and that though you're guilty for His death,
 He is not angry—
 He loves you.

Christ is risen! (*He's risen indeed, alleluia!*)

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit