

THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT! OUR REDEEMER LIVES AND WE WILL SEE HIM WITH OUR OWN EYES! WE HAVE VICTORY OVER DEATH THROUGH OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST.

I KNOW THIS IS A PRETTY BIG DAY, BUT EVERY DAY HAS A LITTLE EASTER IN IT! CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

WHEN THE SON TOOK ON HUMAN FLESH, GOD EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION FOR THE FIRST TIME. AS A NEWBORN BABY, JESUS NEEDED SLEEP. HE NEEDED TO CLOSE HIS EYES IN SLEEP EVERY NIGHT UNTIL HE DIED.

HE HAD RESTED FROM HIS LABORS ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF CREATION, BUT THAT ONLY MEANT HE HAD COMPLETED CREATION AND STARTED CARING FOR IT. NEEDING PHYSICAL REST WAS PART OF FULFILLING RIGHTEOUSNESS. JESUS HAD TO BE LIKE US IN EVERY WAY, SO HIS SINLESS LIFE REPRESENTED US PERFECTLY!

FRIDAY, WE SAW HIS DEATH AS OUR OWN DEATH. HE CLOSED HIS EYES ON THAT CROSS ONLY AFTER FINISHING THE WORK OF TAKING AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD. WE ARE FORGIVEN OF ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS!

HIS FOLLOWERS RESTED THEIR EYES ON HOLY SATURDAY AFTER WATCHING THE UNTHINKABLE TRAGEDY OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION. THEIR BELOVED TEACHER AND LORD WAS DEAD. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA USED HIS INFLUENCE TO SECURE CHRIST'S BODY FROM PILATE AND HASTILY BURIED HIM IN HIS OWN TOMB, THEN CLOSED HIS EYES TO THE SABBATH – THE DAY OF REST.

THE WOMEN KNEW MORE CARE WAS NEEDED TO HONOR JESUS IN DEATH, SO AFTER CLOSING THEIR EYES, RUBBED RAW FROM TEARS, THEY GOT UP EARLY SUNDAY MORNING TO FINISH THE TASK THAT JOSEPH BEGAN.

THEY HAD NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THAT IT WAS ALREADY DONE. A WOMAN CRASHED A DINNER PARTY AND ANOINTED JESUS WITH COSTLY PERFUME. HE SAID: SHE HAS DONE A BEAUTIFUL THING; ANOINTING MY BODY FOR BURIAL.

NOR, HAD THEY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT HIS WORDS ABOUT RISING ON THE THIRD DAY. JESUS FULFILLED THE RULE OF SABBATH BY RESTING IN THAT TOMB. EASTER SUNDAY WAS THE FIRST DAY OF A NEW CREATION. HE BURST FROM THE GRAVE NEVER TO DIE AGAIN. HE PROMISES THE SAME TO EVERY BELIEVER.

THE WOMEN SAW NOTHING BUT DEATH THROUGH THEIR EYES, RED FROM WEeping. ...UNTIL, THE AMAZING NEWS OF A RESURRECTION ROCKED THEIR WORLD! THE ANGEL'S NEWS STUNNED THEM, AND IN A STATE OF SHOCK THEY WENT AWAY HOPING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE, BUT TOO MESSED UP TO SAY A WORD.

EASTER SHOULD DO THIS TO YOU. IT'S NOT ONLY AN INCREDIBLE HISTORICAL EVENT; IT MEANS JESUS REALLY IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS AND THAT ALL HIS PROMISES ARE ABSOLUTELY, CONCRETELY, SHOCKINGLY TRUE!

YOU WILL RISE FROM THE DEAD LIKE HIM! YOU WILL LIVE FOREVER WITHOUT SIN. YOU WILL BE FULLY IN HIS PRESENCE WITHOUT END!

2 **YOU, SO HUMAN, SO SINFUL, SO EASILY WORN OUT, SO OFTEN GIVEN REASON FOR TEARS; YOU, YOU WILL BURST FROM YOUR TOMB TO LIVE WITH AN INDESTRUCTABLE BODY. YOU, YOU WILL HAVE A HEART AND SOUL THAT KNOWS NOTHING BUT PEACE AND JOY AND LOVE!**

THAT FLABBERGASTING NEWS SHOULD BURST UPON YOUR WEeping EYES LIKE JESUS BURST FROM THE TOMB. YOUR FOREVER IS WRITTEN IN STONE; A STONE MYSTERIOUSLY ROLLED AWAY FROM A GUARDED TOMB!

HEH, ONE DAY YOU WILL CLOSE YOUR EYES TO THIS EXHAUSTING WORLD AND OPEN THEM TO A NEW AND GLORIOUS ESTATE. ...BECAUSE OF CHRIST. BY THE GRACE OF GOD! ON ACCOUNT OF GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER!

YOU LIVE IN THAT HOPE! YOUR TROUBLES COME FACE TO FACE WITH THE GLORIOUS NEWS OF AN ANGEL! YOUR GUILT IS BURIED AWAY IN AN EMPTY GRAVE! EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP, YOU AWAKE TO A RISEN SAVIOR! SO, FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS; HE IS YOUR SABBATH REST! YOU ARE NEW EVERY DAY!

YOU CAN'T PRETEND LIFE IS ALWAYS WONDERFUL. YOU CAN'T DENY THE DAILY GRIND OF ROTTEN RULES AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS AND FAILURES AND BILLS AND PAINS AND WORRIES AND IRRITATIONS AND THEN, THERE'S THE BOREDOM AND ALL THE THINGS NOT QUITE RIGHT.

YET, EVERY BURDEN HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE. THE COMFORT YOU HAVE IN JESUS IS UNENDING. HE IS ON YOUR SIDE AND HIS CROSS AND EMPTY TOMB ACCOMPANY YOU RIGHT THROUGH THIS WEARY WORLD. HIS PEACE GIVES A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK ON THINGS – EASTER SHINES LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS.

THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT OF THE BIBLE. EVERYTHING WRITTEN ON THE PAGES ARE THERE BECAUSE GOD WANTS YOU TO SEE PARADISE RESTORED IN JESUS. HE WANTS YOU TO SEE THAT IN SPITE OF A SINFUL WORLD AND YOUR OWN SINFUL HEART, HE LOVES YOU...

...ENOUGH TO DIE IN YOUR PLACE; TO SUFFER HELL IN YOUR STEAD, TO OPEN THE TOMB OF THIS WORLD SO YOU CAN FLY INTO HIS GLORIOUS KINGDOM TO LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER! THAT HOPE IS ALREADY ALIVE IN YOUR HEART; LET IT REGISTER IN YOUR THOUGHTS, SO EASTER CAN ADD JOY TO THE UNHAPPY STUFF.

JESUS OPENED HIS EYES AFTER THREE DAYS REST TO WELCOME YOU INTO HIS ETERNAL REST. LIVE EACH DAY WITH A LITTLE EASTER IN IT.

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

HEH KIDS, HAVE ANY OF YOU SEEN MY GLASSES? WHAT? OH! WITHOUT THEM, I'M NOT ALWAYS SURE WHAT I'M SEEING. THERE COULD BE AN ANGEL SITTING NEXT TO YOU AND I WOULDN'T EVEN SEE HIM! THANKS.

AFTER JESUS DIED IN OUR PLACE A MAN PUT HIM IN A TOMB DUG OUT OF A ROCK WALL. THREE DAYS LATER, WHEN WOMEN CAME TO SAY GOODBYE, THEY SAW AN ANGEL. BUT, THEY DIDN'T SEE WHAT HE SAW. THEY SAW AN EMPTY TOMB WITH JESUS MISSING. THE ANGEL'S EYES SAW JESUS COME BACK TO LIFE.

A MISSING JESUS BRINGS SADNESS. A LIVING JESUS IS THE REASON WE CELEBRATE EASTER SUNDAY! WE LOOK THROUGH ANGEL EYES AND WE SEE JESUS. WE HEAR HIM IN HIS WORDS AND WE SEE HIM IN THE BREAD UP THERE.

...WE BELIEVE HE'S HERE BECAUSE HE SAYS SO AND BECAUSE THE TOMB WAS EMPTY ON EASTER. THOUGH...IF AN ANGEL WAS HANGING OUT IN THE TOMB, IT REALLY WASN'T EMPTY. IN FACT, WHEN THE TWO MARYS AND SALOME GOT INSIDE WITH THE ANGEL, IT WAS ACTUALLY QUITE CROWDED IN THERE!

THE GIRLS WERE STARTLED TO FIND A YOUNG MAN DRESSED IN WHITE INSTEAD OF A DEAD JESUS WRAPPED IN WHITE. ANGELS SCARE PEOPLE, BUT, ADD TO THAT SHOCK, THEIR FEAR ABOUT WHO MOVED JESUS.

THE ANGEL SAW IT ALL; HE TELLS THE GIRLS: *DON'T BE AFRAID, I'M HERE WITH GOOD NEWS. JESUS, THE CRUCIFIED ONE, HAS RISEN - SEE THE PLACE WHERE THEY LAID HIM! GO, TELL HIS DISCIPLES!*

THAT JESUS IS, *THE CRUCIFIED ONE*, IS WAY SIGNIFICANT. MANY OF US WERE RAISED WITH EMPTY CROSSES BECAUSE JESUS HAS RISEN! BUT, THE ANGEL REMINDS US THAT JESUS REMAINS *THE CRUCIFIED ONE*.

THE WOMEN HAD WATCHED JESUS SUFFER FOR THE SIN OF THE WORLD. THEY WOULD VERY SOON SEE THE NAIL SCARS IN HIS HANDS. WITH THE SPIRIT'S HELP THEY'D SEE JESUS AS THE CHURCH GATHERED AROUND HIM IN COMMUNION.

THE APOSTLES SAW JESUS AND WERE ORDAINED TO FORGIVE THE SINS OF BELIEVERS. LATER, A MAN, NAMED SAUL, MET JESUS ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS AND WROTE: *I DECIDED TO KNOW NOTHING EXCEPT JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED*. JESUS ON THE CROSS IS ALWAYS THE CENTER OF OUR FAITH.

LOOK THROUGH THE ANGEL'S EYES: THE RISEN CHRIST IS *THE CRUCIFIED ONE*. IF HE HAD NOT BEEN NAILED TO A CROSS FOR YOUR SIN, NOT ONLY WOULD THE TOMB BE EMPTY; THE RESURRECTION WOULD BE EMPTY!

EASTER IS ESSENTIAL SO YOU SEE WITH ANGEL EYES. GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER ARE LIKE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN. YOU CAN'T BUY ANYTHING WITH A ONE-SIDED QUARTER. JESUS COULDN'T PAY FOR YOUR SALVATION BY ONLY DYING OR BY ONLY LIVING. TOGETHER, HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION ARE FULL PAYMENT OF YOUR SIN AND THE PROOF OF YOUR RESURRECTION TO LIFE!

2 IT'S MORE THAN INTERESTING THAT JESUS CONTINUES THE PATTERN HE ESTABLISHED ON EASTER; HE HIDES HIMSELF FROM THE SIGHT OF HIS FOLLOWERS. HE USES AN ANGEL TO PROCLAIM HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

LIKE THE WOMEN AT THE TOMB, YOU CAN'T SEE JESUS WITH YOUR OWN EYES. THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANGEL OPENED THEIR EYES TO JESUS. TODAY, HE SENT AN EARTHLY ANGEL TO CALM YOUR FEAR AND OPEN YOUR EYES TO CHRIST.

JESUS SENT HIS APOSTLES OUT TO BE HIS ANGELS, HIS MESSENGERS – SAME WORD. EVERYWHERE THE APOSTLES WENT, THEY LEFT PASTORS TO CONTINUE SHARING THE AMAZING NEWS OF GOOD FRIDAY AND EASTER.

THERE'S NOTHING PARTICULARLY ANGELIC ABOUT THE DISCIPLES OR YOUR PASTOR. NOBODY WOULD LOOK AT ME AND SAY, HE'S GOT ANGEL EYES. BUT, AS LONG AS I SPEAK THE WORD OF JESUS CRUCIFIED AND RISEN, YOUR FEAR IS RELIEVED AND THE PEACE, LOVE AND JOY OF GOD GIVE YOU REAL HOPE.

I OFFER YOU THE EYES OF JESUS. FROM THE CROSS HE LOOKS ON YOU AND SAYS: FATHER, *FORGIVE THEM*. THEN, WITH HIS EASTER EYES, HE LOOKS YOU IN THE FACE AND SAYS: *I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; BELIEVE IN ME AND EVEN THOUGH YOU DIE, YET, YOU WILL LIVE.*

GRAYCIE MET JESUS TODAY HIDDEN IN WATER. HER SIN IS FORGIVEN AND HIS SPIRIT IS WITH HER. SHE GETS TO JOIN US AT THE CRUCIFIED ONE'S CROSS AND SING SONGS OF ALLELUIA WITH US OUTSIDE HIS TOMB.

WHAT A JOY THAT BAPTISM ISN'T JUST A ONE DAY EVENT; IT'S OUR GIFT ALL THE WAY TO HEAVEN. WE ARE BAPTIZED INTO THE CROSS AND OUT OF THE TOMB!

AS A BAPTIZED CHILD OF GOD, YOU DIE TO SIN EVERY DAY AND ARE RAISED TO BRAND NEW LIFE. THAT CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION WILL KEEP YOU SAFE UNTIL YOU RISE OUT OF OUR OWN TOMB INTO ETERNAL EASTER!

AND, HERE'S SOMETHING: I DON'T NEED MY GLASSES TO PROCLAIM TO YOU:
THE CRUCIFIED ONE...CHRIST IS RISEN! *HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!*