

Easter Sunday Sermon – Luke 24:1–12

There is a bird, a magpie, near our home that sings before the sun rises.

Before the first shaft of light breaks the eastern horizon, while the dark still hangs heavy on the empty block around us and the gum trees in the carpark stand like shadows, it warbles beautifully. Not because the light has come—but because it knows the light is coming.

That is what hope sounds like.

This morning we are with the women, in the dark before dawn, with hearts that want to believe the light will come. We gather with the women at the tomb in **Luke 24**, with their hands full of spices and their hearts full of grief. They are not looking for resurrection. They are looking for a body.

They come to the grave expecting silence. But the silence is broken. The stone is rolled away. The tomb is empty. And then—these astonishing words from two dazzling messengers:

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen.”

Now if we were there, I think we might have blinked. Swallowed hard. Maybe said something like, *“What do you mean he’s not here? We saw him die. We saw the sky go dark. We saw the tomb sealed. Don’t play with our hearts.”*

Because when you’ve been through the crucifixion—when the bottom has dropped out of your life—it’s hard to believe in anything, let alone resurrection.

But that’s exactly where resurrection shows up. Not when we’ve got it all together. Not when the sun is shining and the songs are easy to sing. No, resurrection comes in the half-light of morning, when we’re still wiping tears from our eyes and trying to make sense of it all.

It’s important to notice that the angels don’t scold the women. They don’t say, *“You should’ve known better.”* They say, *“Remember.”*

“Remember how he told you... that the Son of Man must be handed over... and on the third day rise again.”

And that's when it begins to dawn on them—not just the sun, but the truth. That maybe death doesn't get the last word. That maybe the story isn't over. That maybe the kingdom of God is more alive than they ever dared hope.

They go back to tell the others. Breathless. Disbelieving their own joy. And do you know what happens?

No one believes them.

“Their words seemed to them like an idle tale.” In the Greek, it's the word used for delirium. The kind of things people say when they're out of their minds. Because resurrection doesn't fit into neat categories. It refuses to be domesticated. It blows open graves and expectations alike.

But Peter—Peter, who had denied him three times—runs. He runs to the tomb, bends down, and sees the linen cloths lying there. And he goes home amazed.

And maybe that's where Easter leaves us, too. Not with certainty, but amazement. Not with a tidy answer, but with a holy mystery. That in the deepest night, God was already working. That death has been unmade from the inside out. That the song of hope is louder than the silence of the tomb.

Paul puts it this way in **1 Corinthians 15**:

“If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead.”

In fact. Not in theory. Not as metaphor. But as the first fruits of a whole new creation.

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”

That is Easter's defiant cry.

And friends, we need that cry. We need it in the face of wars and floods and cancers and quiet heartbreaks. We need it when the news is bad and the prayers feel unanswered. We need to know that Christ has stepped out of the grave and taken us with him—that nothing is beyond redemption now.

We sing it in the old hymn:

“Christ is alive! Let Christians sing. The cross stands empty to the sky.”

Yes. The cross still stands—but now it points not to death, but to life. The cross is empty, the sky is not empty; it is full of resurrection light.

So here’s what I want you to know this Easter morning:

Resurrection is not just what happened to Jesus.

It is what will happen to us.

It is what is happening right now—quietly, persistently, like seeds breaking open underground.

It is what gives us the courage to sing like the magpie, before the sun comes up.

To live like people who have seen the stone rolled away.

To go and tell—just like the women did—even if others think we’re out of our minds.

Because hope can sound like madness in a broken world.

But it’s the truest thing we have.

So sing, even in the dark.

Run to the tomb, even if you don’t understand.

Live like the risen Christ is already out ahead of you—because he is.

He is not in the tomb.

He is not in the past.

He is risen. He is here. And he is calling your name.

Thanks be to God. Amen.