

Pastor Jon's Easter Sermon in 2025

Alleluia Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed Alleluia!

Let us pray. Mighty God, we thank you for the gift of resurrection dawn, bringing the glory of our risen Lord who makes every morning new. Renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your children, and bring about your peace for all, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen!

How about a little Easter Humor?

One Easter morning, a woman was on her way to church when her car broke down. Not wanting to be late for service, she ordered an Uber. The car arrived, and she quickly jumped in the back.

Halfway through the ride, she asked the driver a question, but the driver didn't respond. So, she leaned forward and tapped him on the shoulder. The driver let out a loud scream, swerved into the other lane, and almost hit another car. He slammed on his brakes and pulled over.

The woman said, "What just happened? I'm so sorry. I had no idea that tapping you on the shoulder would alarm you like that."

The uber driver responded, "No, no, you really didn't do anything wrong. It's just that this is my first day driving for Uber. You see, for the past 25 years, my work was to drive a hearse." (you never expect the dead to talk to you or tap you on the shoulder).

Imagine the surprise the women experienced at the tomb where Jesus was laid. The stone was already rolled back and the tomb was empty. Their mission of anointing Jesus' body and giving him a proper burial was thwarted.

How often are our plans upended? You know the times when you are forced to make a move or a job change, deal with a health challenge, navigate a loss, pick up the pieces after broken relationship, or try to have faith in God to see us through when things seem out of your control? Luke says, the women at the tomb were perplexed and later terrified. But two angels met the woman at the tomb with a message.

We know they were angels because they are mentioned in the Road to Emmaus story just after this in verse 23. The message was, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee, that he would be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and on the third day `rise again.” The women did remember, and they went back to tell the other 11 disciples. But these words seemed an idle tale to the men ... or literally wild talk. The men didn't believe the women's testimony at first. This was their first problem... not to listen to the women in their lives. They could have saved a lot of time and energy in getting the message of Jesus' resurrection out. But thankfully Peter was at least curious, and he did go and see for himself that the tomb was empty. But that same day, Jesus appeared to some other disciples on the Road to Emmaus and showed that he was alive in the breaking of the bread.

Easter really is about remembering. Remembering the whole story of Jesus. His life, death, and resurrection. But in particular, here in Luke, remembering what happened on the cross. If Jesus' story ended at the cross, we wouldn't be here today. His life would have ended in pain, agony, and horror... a complete loss. Satan and the powers of evil would have won. But Easter changed everything. Jesus overcame death and the grave... he is the first fruits of the resurrection. On Easter, God says yes to Jesus and no to the powers who killed him. Easter is the great reversal of Good Friday. Easter affirms that the domination systems of this world are not of God and that they do not have the final word! Can I get an amen?

Easter means that God's great cleanup of the world has begun... that God's kingdom of love and justice is breaking in even as we speak... and like the bubbles I shared with the children, we are a part of making Jesus' kingdom a reality on the ground. We too are called to go and tell others in word and deed about Jesus and his victory over death and the principalities and powers of this world.

We are an Easter people. We believe in death and resurrection... not only after we die, but now. Every day is a new day. Like the choir anthem so beautifully proclaimed today: Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,

Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

Alleluia Christ is Risen. Christ is Risen Indeed, Alleluia.