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THE STAND
EASTER
THE RESURRECTION

They hurried, they ran to the tomb did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. They ran.

They were excited, nervous, filled with great anticipation as well as sadness, as they ran to the place where Jesus was laid. It was the day after the Sabbath, the third day. If they had heard about the Resurrection, they surely did not believe it just like all the disciples and followers of Jesus. They went to the tomb to keep watch, a vigil as it were. As usual, there were no men, for this was woman's work.

As they arrived, there came an angelic earthquake, there appeared an angel of the Lord like lightning and in white and that angel rolled back the stone which covered the tomb. There were guards at that tomb and they were terrified so much so that they fainted. Unlike the men, the women did not.

The angel of Lord told these Marys they had nothing to fear. The angel knew that they were looking for Jesus, as we all were, the one who was nailed to the cross, was dead and was buried, laid here in this tomb as a matter of fact. But, said the angel, He is not here, for HE IS RISEN! Come with me, said he, and see where HE lay. Just imagine the anxiety, the stunning wonder and awe which must have taken over these Marys. These women were the first to see and know that Christ was risen from the grave. They were the first to see, where He lay no more.

Go, go said the angel, and go quickly. Get out there and spread the word. Go and tell the disciples and all mankind. Go quickly and spread this glorious good news. These women were the first messengers of the greatest message for every human being. They were the first to tell the world that:

HE IS RISEN!

As Mary Magdalene and the other Mary ran, with wonder and joy, they met the risen Jesus face-to-face. They knew it was He, without doubt, with open acceptance, and they fell before Him. They hugged Him, embraced Him, energetic and emotionally even as they praised and worshiped Him. How interesting that the Lord with an obvious touch of humor told them to ease up, be more gentle. But He knew, as we do, that it is so wonderful to feel the all embracing hug of a loving woman.

He told them not to be afraid for there really is nothing to fear, even death itself. He told them to go and tell the good news of His Resurrection to His brothers, His disciples. And, He told these women to tell PETER as well. How interesting that Jesus singled out Peter from the other disciples, now ten of them, this eleventh disciple who had betrayed Him, denied Him not once, not twice but three times and was obviously mired deep in his guilt.

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Tell him, the Lord said, that I am risen and he is forgiven, like all of us who have denied or betrayed Him are forgiven. Peter, the Rock, but with feet of clay was redeemed and reconciled.

Shortly thereafter, His eleven disciples, His brothers, met Him face-to-face. Some worshipped, but some, unbelievably doubted. They heard the word from the Marys, two other disciples brought further word, and they actually met the Risen Lord face-to-face and they still did not believe. THEY STILL DOUBTED! That is unbelievable. We who live 2,000 years later and believe would give anything to meet him face-to-face, person-to-person, in the flesh, in the nail-pierced flesh, to see and touch the body as evidence of the Resurrection. What an experience that would be. And though we have never seen, we yet believe. Perhaps that is why Jesus refers to those who have never seen but trust in faith as blessed, seriously blessed. These eleven original skeptics doubted, did not really believe.

So, Jesus rebuked them, seriously rebuked their unbelief. He criticized and confronted their hardness of heart. They worked and lived with this man for three years. They knew Him intimately, and still they doubted. That was as hard as a hardened heart can be.

Nonetheless, He like always, forgave them and gave them their marching orders. Go ye, He told them, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel, tell others, teach them, train them, and make disciples of all nations. Offer them belief and baptism, and as a consequence eternal life. And, know this He said. Know that:

I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.

Even unto the ends of the earth. I am with you, you and I are one, for all eternity. Just like with us who believe.

He was with them, hard of heart, doubting, even as He is with us today, hard of heart and doubters as we are. The fellowship and forgiveness of the Risen Christ, the love and joy which He offers, is the finest thing in life, all of life now and forever. We are partakers of that faith and we are the ones who spread that Gospel message of love and peace to the world. It is that love which the world needs now more than ever.

And so Christians everywhere say Glory to God in the Highest for:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

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