



He is Risen  
He is Risen

# Holy Week Devotional

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Prepared by Members of  
Our Saviour Evangelical Free Church  
for Holy Week of 2021

# Sunday - March 28th



The Sunday before he was crucified Jesus entered Jerusalem as crowds cheered his arrival.

Read through Mark 11:1-10 and reflect on the crowd's response



# Monday - March 29th

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

*Luke 23:34*

## *Reflection from Nate Kinnee*

What is our natural reaction when treated unfairly? If someone cuts us off in traffic? If the table seated after ours receives their food first? If a grade at school or an evaluation at work doesn't match our own expectation? If we discover that a friend or family member is not as loyal as we had hoped? We might react externally, or we might just simmer internally, but the feelings are virtually unavoidable: disappointment, anger, indignation, resentment. As humans, we tend to be experts in expectation. We know what we deserve, and we want every bit of it (or maybe just a little more). When the behavior of others falls short of this expectation, our own internal judgement is passed swiftly, often voiced via complaint or criticism. The term “outrage culture” has been coined as a result of our society's propensity to find fault in seemingly any situation.

Jesus found himself nailed to a cross, facing an excruciatingly painful death sentence, hung between two criminals who had actually done deeds worthy of the punishment. It is no exaggeration to say that Christ's crucifixion was the single greatest injustice in the history of the world. It was the harshest sentence, carried out against the most

innocent of men – the only innocent one, to be exact. Yet Jesus himself was not concerned with lamenting these circumstances. Rather, His mind was fixed upon His ultimate mission – paying the penalty for the sin of all men so that their broken relationship with God could be restored. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It is almost inconceivable that such love, compassion, and forgiveness could be shared in that moment with the very people who perpetrated this atrocity against the Son of God. There may be no clearer picture than this of His great mercy and amazing grace. And there may be no more perfect example of what is written in Isaiah 55:8-9: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

### **Questions for reflection or discussion:**

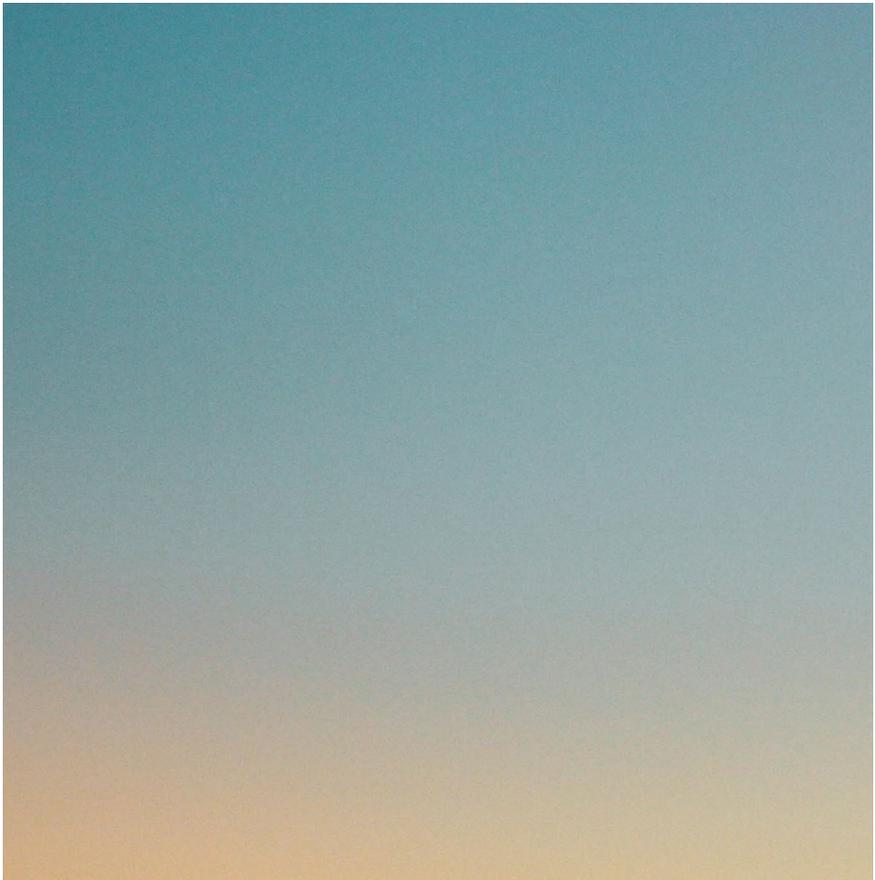
- On behalf of which people or groups of people do you think Jesus was forgiveness?
- Since Jesus says they did not know what they were doing... what is it that they thought they were doing?
- How should the love, compassion, and forgiveness of Jesus guide us as we deal with situations in our own lives?

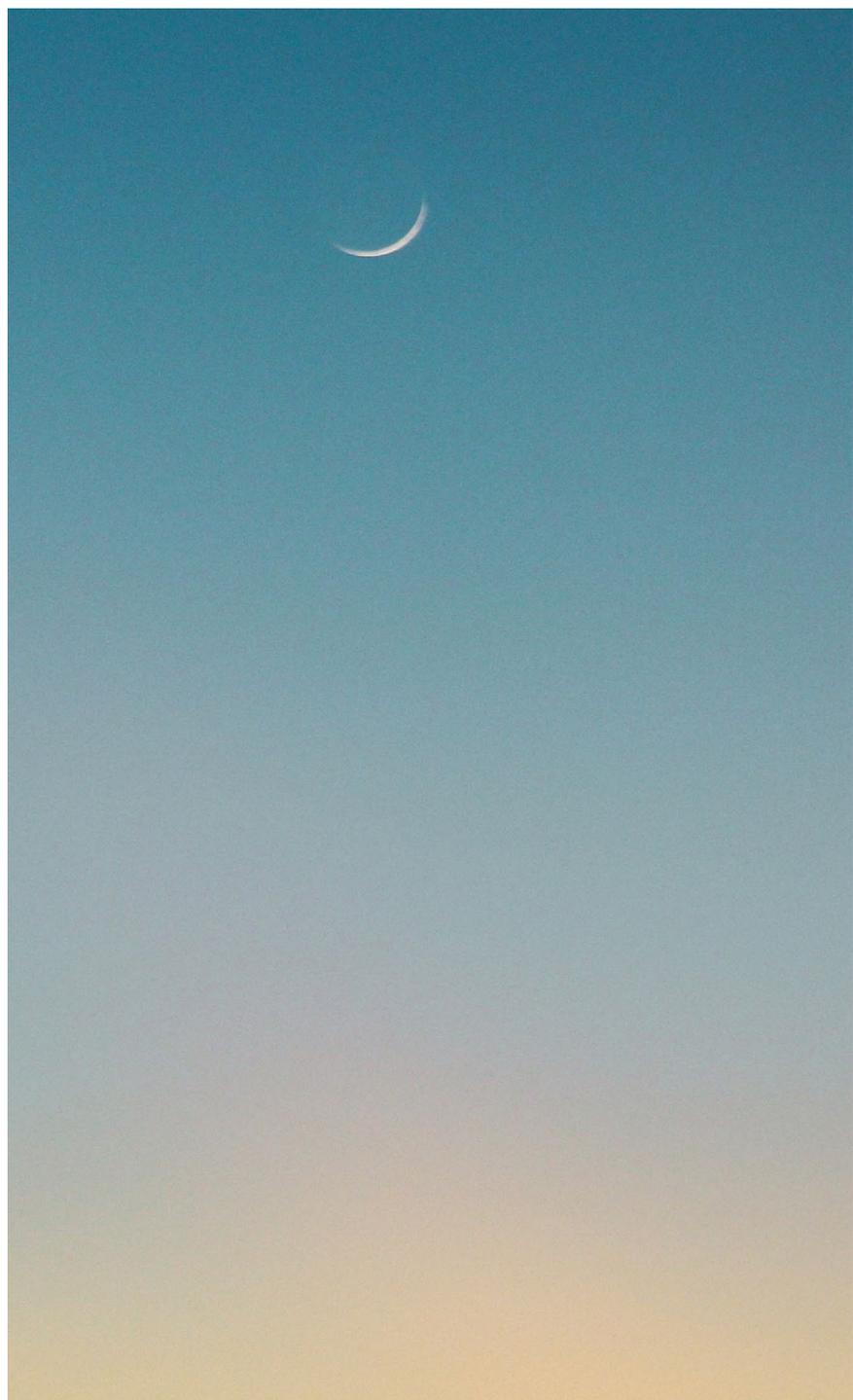
# Tuesday - March 30th

Jesus' disciples followed him for several years as he taught and performed many miracles. And yet at their last meal before his death he revealed it was one of his closest followers who would betray him.

Read John 13:21-30

Spend a few minutes in prayer and confession





# Wednesday - March 31st

And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

*Luke 23:43*

## *Reflection from Janelle Fulwyler*

Can you remember the last time you were in pain? (Maybe you are in pain even now.) Maybe you hit your head, stubbed your toe. Maybe you were really sick. Did anyone try to talk to you when you felt this way? How did you respond?

Whenever I smash a finger or have a toothache, I tell everyone, “Just give me some space!” because I know (and they know) that if they don’t, my words will probably be angry and ugly in that moment.

Take a minute to think about Jesus’ situation here. Back up a little and read Luke 23:32-46. What does it say Jesus was doing?

He was hanging. On a cross. By nails. Big nails. Huge nails. For something he didn’t even do.

Then someone talks to him; who is it? Two people, actually.

Yes, those someones are men who deserve to be there. Men who are paying the due price for their own poor choices. What do they say? The first one makes fun of Jesus. (Actually the both do, according to Matthew 27:44)

How would you reply, if you were suffering so, and someone had the nerve to make fun of you?

Does Jesus reply like you would have?

He waits quietly. He doesn't even respond to the jeering. The second criminal speaks. What does he say now?

He's had time to think, and feels the guilt for his crimes. He sees the injustice of the situation, that Jesus not only wasn't guilty, but He also bears the weight of what both these men have done.

Plus what we have done. You and me.

The second criminal takes a step of faith. What does he ask Jesus?  
"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

And Jesus, what does he say?

"Yeah right, buddy!! People like you are the whole reason I am up here! I've never sinned in my life! A little while ago, you were making fun of me too, and now my Father has turned His face away, and you really, really have no idea what I am going through right now!"

No. That's what I would have said. Or at least felt. But probably said.

But not Jesus.

Through His pain, through His lonely, unjust suffering, Jesus responds with immense love and compassion: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

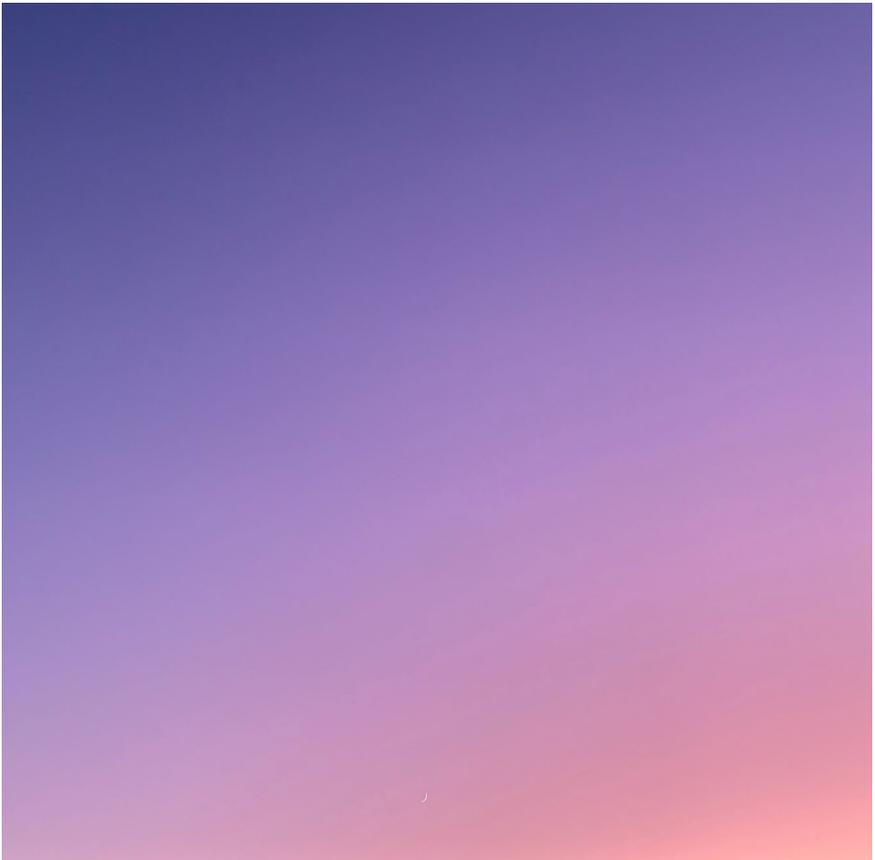
Whoa. He forgives this guy. He promises eternal life once he dies! Out of His pain, Jesus offers hope. In the midst of His suffering, He brings salvation! From death comes LIFE!

**For further study:**

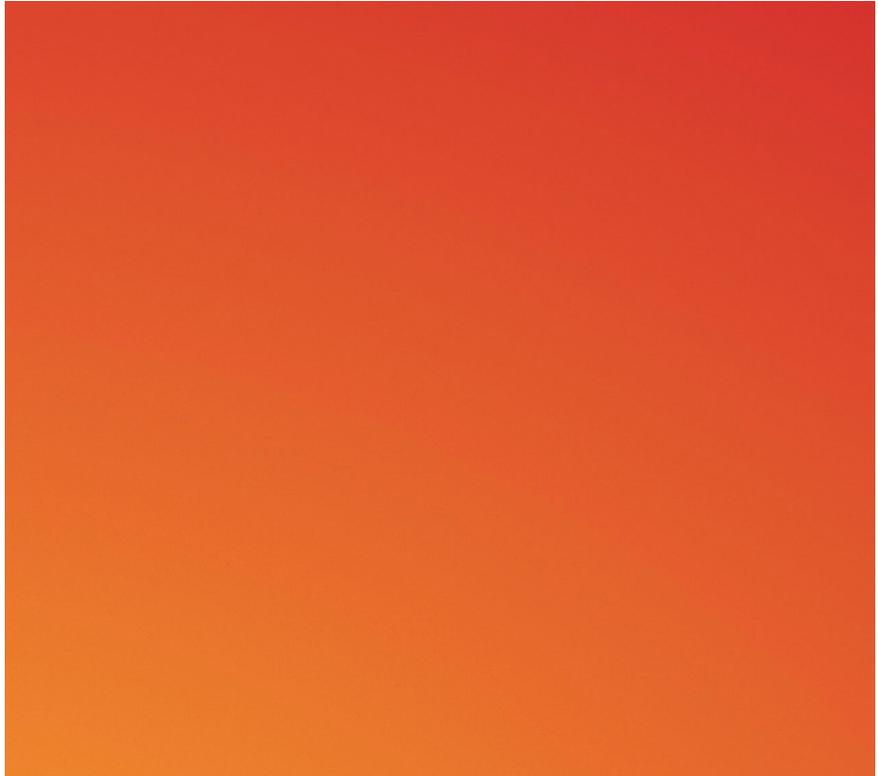
- This wasn't Jesus' first gracious response in His suffering; See John 18:11, 19:10-11, Luke 23:34, and Matthew 27:11-14

- Read John 22:39-46 and consider how Jesus was able to respond the way He did. How does this give you hope for your own reactions to others?

- Think about the joy this moment must've brought to Jesus! A beautiful, joyful reminder of why He was doing what He was doing. How can we, made in His image, remember our purpose in the midst of our pain?



# Thursday - April 1st



Before his arrest and execution Jesus prayed to the Father on behalf of all his disciples.

Read John 17:1-26 slowly

# Friday - April 2nd

When Jesus had received the sour wine He said, “It is finished” and bowed His head and gave up His Spirit.  
*John 19:30*

## *Reflection from Joan Nulton*

Some of the last words of Jesus on the cross were “It is finished”. What did these words mean to Jesus and what do they mean for us?

The Son of God left His perfect home in Heaven to come into a broken world. He experienced weariness, pain, sorrow, temptation, rejection, misunderstanding, and abuse with the knowledge that one day He would be the final sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus begged His Father to change His mind. Would it be possible for this cup to pass from Him? He knew the pain of God’s wrath for sin would be great. When Jesus said, “It is finished”, His suffering as man was ended.

Love motivated Jesus to choose to carry out His Father’s plan. God wants to get our attention and remind us that He loves us. But we can’t come into His presence with sin in our hearts and we can’t get rid of our sin no matter how hard we try. Jesus came to rescue us and restore our relationship with His Father.

Jesus tells us that we are sinners and need a Savior to be reconciled to the Father. Jesus lived a sinless life and became our unblemished lamb. He became the final and ultimate sacrifice and shed His blood so we can be forgiven. He suffered our punishment and “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ”. Romans 8:1



When He died the veil to the Holy of Holies was torn in two and we can now “come with confidence to the throne of grace that we may find grace and help in time of need”. Hebrews 16:4. Jesus is “The Way” back to our Heavenly Father.

For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2 His work on earth is finished. Today Jesus is interceding for us before the Father.

Let’s share the good news and glorify, praise and worship our Savior who loves us more deeply than we can imagine.

**Questions for reflection or discussion:**

- What do the words, “It is finished” mean to you?
- What would our life be like if Jesus refused to be obedient to His Father and did not become our Savior?
- What is the meaning of grace and what does it mean to you?

# Saturday - April 3rd

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

*Luke 23:46-47*

## *Reflection from Phil Gunderson*

This is the last of the 7 words of Jesus on the cross, the last thing Jesus said before He died. This is a prayer. Jesus, God the Son, is talking to God the Father, His Father. Think about what has just happened. Shortly before this Jesus had cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The eternal relationship between the Father and the Son was broken because our sin was imputed to Jesus causing this separation. It was a time where God's wrath against our sin was being poured out on Jesus as our substitute as He paid for our sin.

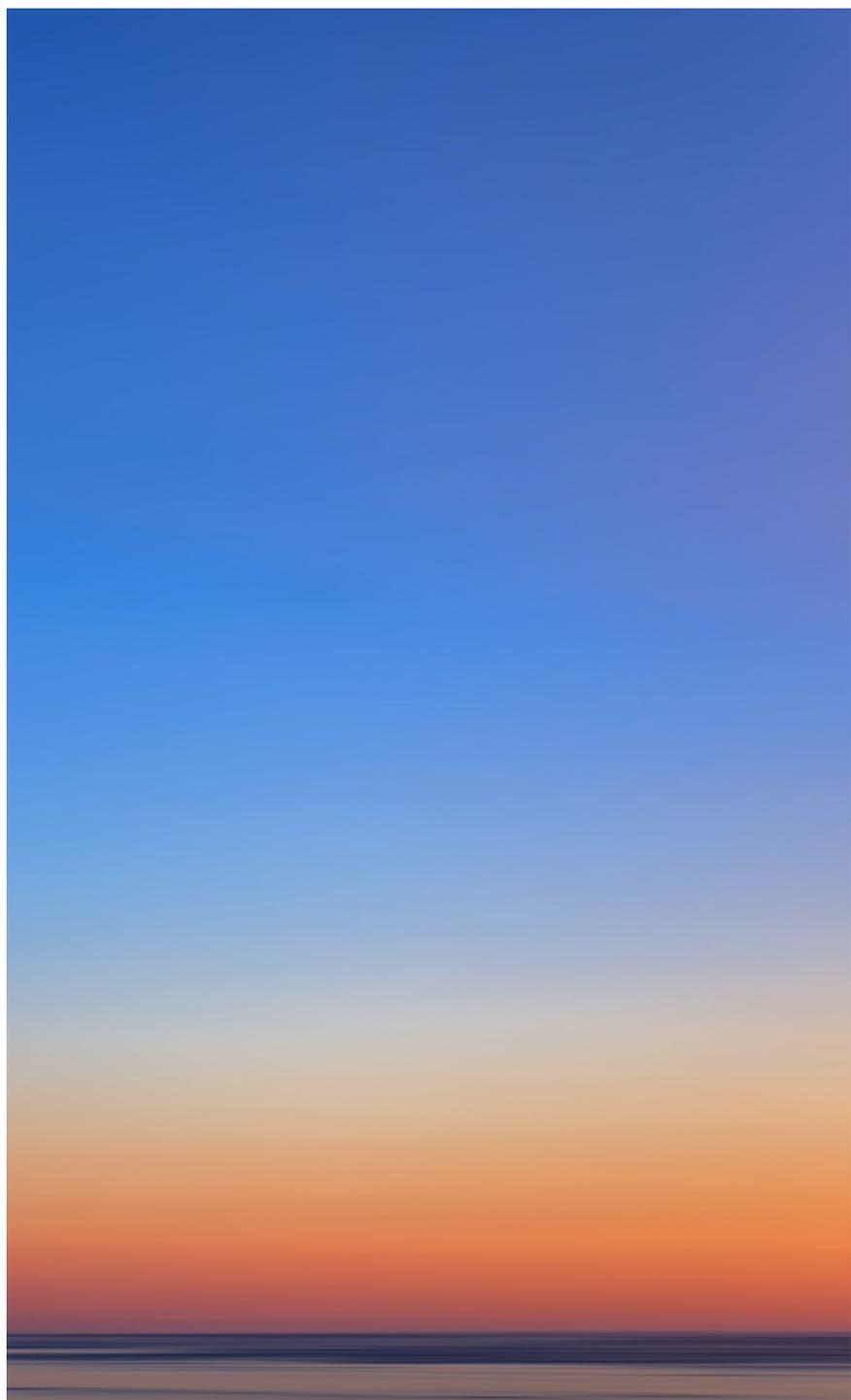
But now Jesus called out with a loud voice, the voice of a Son to a Father, a voice of relationship, a voice of triumph, a voice that said I have obeyed You and I have finished what we have agreed before the foundation of the earth that I came to do, a voice totally in control with His Father. Yes, Jesus still had to die, but the relationship with the Father was restored. This amazing thing that Jesus had just done had enabled the Father now to be just, and forgive our sin as we trust in Jesus Christ and what He did for us on the cross. I love thinking and reading about the righteousness and justice of God in Romans 3:21-26.

God is Holy and could not forgive our sin nor have a relationship with us without there being a sinless human substitute to take the punishment for our sin. So God (The Father and the Son) had to do it Themselves because Jesus was the only perfect human. Jesus took our punishment and died in our place! God did it all! What a plan, and what a relationship – the Father and the Son. Yes, we see this relationship clearly in the last words of Jesus on the cross, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” This is the prayer I want to pray when I die. When I think about it, this is the prayer I want to pray every day – not about dying but about living with my spirit committed to God!

In thinking about the great relationship of love between the Father and the Son it makes me wonder about your relationship with God.

**I have two questions for you:**

1. Are you His? Have you received Him as your own Savior and Lord? He died and rose again to spend eternity with you (See John 17:20-26). And not just for eternity, but every day until then. He said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”
2. If you are His, are you spending a lot of time with Him every day? God said that we should pray continually!



# Sunday - April 4th

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.

*Mark 16:5-6*

## *Reflection from Lauren Alvarado*

We anticipate Easter morning with such excitement and enthusiasm proclaiming, "He is risen!" However, the first Easter didn't start that way at all...

Mary, Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene, and a few other women, expected Jesus to be in the tomb on the morning of the third day. We know this because the Bible tells us they had bought and carried spices with them to anoint Jesus' body (Mark 16:1). These women were so precious to Jesus; some had known him all their lives and others knew his ministry well. They knew he was God incarnate. And yet, they expected he would still be lying in the tomb on the third day after his crucifixion.

It's hard for us, on this side of history, to imagine anyone who was remotely close to Jesus, at that time, would not remember him telling them of his death and resurrection. Jesus' disciples and followers, believed the worst had happened.

How often do we do the same thing in situations that feel out of control?

When a difficult circumstance or life change happens, are we not quick to forget God's promises to us and worry he has abandoned us?

Thankfully, we are not the authors of life. While the women and disciples thought it was all over—God, in his sovereignty, was working behind the scenes. The best was yet to come! Despite the sadness and fear, God's rescue plan for us was not missed. When everyone felt hopeless, God was up to something big!

The angel told the women that Jesus had been victorious over death.

“He is risen; he is not here!”

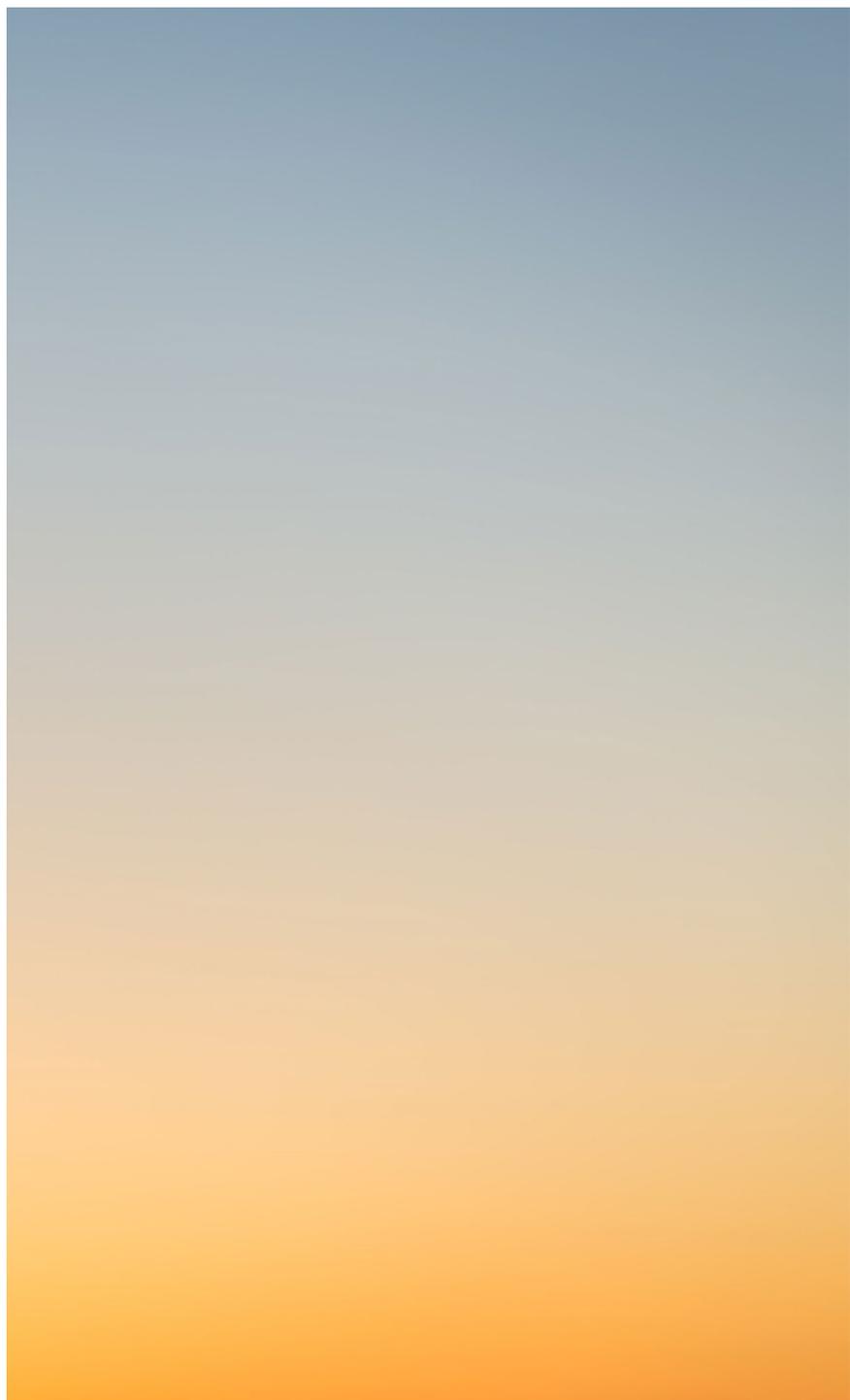
What joy they must have felt! Their Lord and savior had defeated death, just as Jesus said he would. Their sorrow was turned to celebration when they least expected it!

The resurrection of Jesus bridges the gap between us and God. We can be in relationship with a holy God because of Easter. No matter how many times we think God's plans have failed or think he's surprised like we are—God is in control and is our greatest joy.

Happy Easter! He is risen indeed!

### **Questions for reflection or discussion:**

- When life doesn't go as planned, what are some of God's promises that we can remember?
- How does the resurrection give you hope in a relationship with God?
- What can you do today to share the good news of Easter?



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