

Sermon Draft
Remember Jesus Risen
Text: 2 Timothy 2:8, 11

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

That's the greeting many church members have learned to use in the Easter season. It's one of many reminders of the joy that follows the resurrection of Jesus. All through the season of Lent, we talked about the word *remember* and how it's followed by an action.

When we remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, what action do we take? Do we really rejoice? Are we really filled with joy? Or do we just say "alleluia" without really having much joy in our voices or in our lives? Well, that might happen if we were on our own. But since Jesus is risen from the dead, we are not on our own. He is alive, and so all our actions tap into his almighty power. ***"In him we live and move and have our being"*** (Acts 17:28).

So, when we remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, what action does God take in us? He raises us. He raises our hopes. He raises our joy. He raises our lips and our lives.

Jesus Causes His Resurrection to Be Remembered So That People Will Rise and Live with Him.

Early Easter morning, some women remembered the awful things of Friday—the death of Jesus—and that the usual preparation of a body had not been completed. So their action was to make their way, sadly and somewhat fearfully, to the tomb. They were fully expecting to find a body. They were not expecting a resurrection.

Luke 24:2–3 says, *“And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”* The next verse says, “they were perplexed about this.”

What a great story it would have been if they had said, “Yes, it’s just as he said, and it’s just as we knew it would be. He’s risen. He’s alive.”

They didn’t remember what Jesus had said about rising on the third day. So God sent a messenger: an angel appeared to them to jog their memory. *“Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise”* (Luke 24:6–7).

When Jesus had told them those things, he knew it would be hard to remember and harder to believe, so he had first said, “let these words sink into your ears” (Lk 9:44). It didn’t sink too deep, because we are told, “but they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said” (Lk 18:34). They forgot, and they were *not* filled with joy. They had fear. They had doubt. When some actually saw Jesus, the others didn’t even believe them! Who could blame those women or the disciples for not remembering those words?

But someone remembered. While the disciples forgot that Jesus said he would rise from the dead on the third day, his enemies remembered it. They came and told Pilate, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first” (Mt 27:63–64). The enemies remembered Jesus’ words and did something about it.

They sealed the tomb so the body would stay there. The disciples forgot the words of Jesus and spent long hours in sorrow, fear, and unbelief as if the body were still sealed in the tomb. Jesus would change all of that.

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What about us? Do we sometimes forget God's words of resurrection and live as though Jesus were still in the tomb? Since we are united with Christ, even buried with Christ Paul says (Rom 6:4), do we live as though *we* were still in that tomb with him, as good as dead? St. Paul puts all of this in excellent perspective in 1 Corinthians 15, his great resurrection chapter. ***“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins”*** (1 Corinthian 15:14, 17). That's the worst thing right there, to be still in our sins separated from God, guilty of judgment with no hope for eternity and little hope for the present.

Paul goes on to talk about the importance of the resurrection for the future . . . for eternal life, saying, ***“If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied”*** (1 Corinthians 15:19). Who could blame us for looking sad and living sad? This life is often sad and challenging and depressing. Then he negates all of that gloom and emptiness and nothingness and says, ***“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”*** (15:20). Although my computer’s spell checker doesn’t recognize it, the word *firstfruits* is very important. It implies that there will be more to follow. As Christ was raised from the dead, so will those who are united with him by faith.

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While the women and the disciples were sad not remembering, not believing Jesus caused them to remember opened their eyes to really see him and then they were filled with joy. In Luke 24, angels told the women to remember.

“Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.’ And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest” (Luke 24:6–9).

Now the disciples remembered some other things Jesus had said. Going way back to the second chapter of John when they asked him for a sign, Jesus said, *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” They thought he meant the building, “but he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken”* (John 2:19, 21–22). Later, when a crowd welcomed Jesus on Palm Sunday, *“His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him”* (John 12:16).

The disciples remembered and believed. They remembered, and their lives were different because Jesus had risen from death, just as he said.

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I suppose the thought crosses most of our minds that if Jesus appeared in person to us, it would be so much easier to believe and to rejoice in all circumstances. But Jesus didn't appear in person to the women or to the disciples right away. It was an angel—a messenger of the Lord—who appeared to the women and said *“he has risen, as he said.”* Then that angel told the women to be the next messengers: *“Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.”* And *they departed quickly “with fear and great joy”* (Matthew 28:6, 7, 8).

We also get the word of Jesus' resurrection from a messenger: the Holy Bible. All these centuries later, the Word of God is still telling us that Jesus “has risen, as he said.” We can also depart “with fear and great joy.” The women were still frightened at what had happened, but also joyful over what was happening and still going to happen.

I wouldn't doubt that they all tried to remember everything else Jesus had said . . . waiting for those things to happen as well. What should we remember so that we continue to live in the joy of Easter every day? What does God cause us to remember by placing it in his Word? *“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his”* (Romans 6:5). *“If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”*

(Colossians 3:1–3). There are more . . . many more . . . enough that we could spend every Sunday for the rest of the year with God's Word causing us to remember the joy that Christ's resurrection brings. And in fact, that's what our worship is. Every Sunday is to be a little Easter, a time to remember Jesus risen from the dead.

Jesus Causes His Resurrection to Be Remembered So That People Will Rise and Live with Him. Amen