

# Easter Sunday

## HE IS RISEN!

WEEK OF 04/05/26

THE SILLIEST WORDS OF EASTER

MATTHEW 27:62-66

### **Silence** (1-2 minutes)

Sit silently together for a minute as a way to center your heart and invite the Holy Spirit to help you listen to and receive God's Word.

### **Opening Prayer** (2-3 minutes)

**Read:** Matthew 27:62-66

### **Devotional**

We have entered into a season on the Christian calendar called "Eastertide", or the Easter season, a 50-day period spanning from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. During this period, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and His appearances to His followers. It is a celebration of His victory over death, the fulfillment of God's promises.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is no footnote to history. It is the hinge of history – it is the will of God on full display, and nothing has the power to stop it – nothing. This doesn't stop certain people from trying. This week, we're focusing on the lengths some will go to thwart God's purpose.

*Read Matthew 27:62-63* | The chief priests and Pharisees, traditionally political rivals and doctrinal adversaries, gathered together to seek an audience with Pontius Pilate. Days before, they had refused to enter Pilate's praetorium to safeguard from defilement prior to the Passover. Now, on Passover Sabbath itself, they enter without hesitation, revealing something important about the orientation of their hearts.

1. What is the irony of the chief priests and Pharisees meeting with Pilate on the Sabbath?
2. How do they address Pilate? How do they refer to Jesus?

*Read Matthew 27:64* | The Jewish leaders' appeal to Pilate is to allow them to secure the tomb so that no one can come near it or breach it. It is important to note what this does *not*

reveal. It does not reveal their belief that a miracle would actually occur. It does not reveal a belief in Jesus' words that He would rise from the dead if they killed Him.

3. What was their purpose in requesting the tomb be sealed? What were they guarding against?
4. Why are the words to "make the tomb secure" the silliest words of Easter? What does this request say about the state of the Jewish leaders' faith?

*Read Matthew 27:65-66* | Pilate approved their request and allowed the tomb to be "secured". The tomb was, in a sense, triple-bolted: a massive disc-shaped stone rolled over the tomb entrance, the official Roman seal (a cord/rope with each end smothered with wax or cement pressed onto the stone door with the governor's seal), and then the guard, likely four soldiers on rotating watch, ready for combat. The text essentially says, "Padlock it, duct tape it, guard it, insure it, and plan for everything – except God..."

5. The guards sealed the tomb. God opened it anyway. And then He laughed. Read Psalm 2:1-4. Why does God laugh?

Let's bring this down to ground level. We may consider ourselves wiser than the first-century Pharisee or chief priests, but if we're honest, we don't just read about sealed tombs. We build them. We are very good at walling off parts of our lives, sealing off areas we never want to open, burying hurts, doubts, or fears. We spend enormous amounts of energy guarding our tombs, managing outcomes, perceptions, and trying to control circumstances – or God Himself.

6. What is the futility in our trying to "guard our tombs"? What do you feel God wants us to do instead?
7. Consider this statement: "We will over-estimate the power of others when we underestimate the power of God." Take a moment and think about areas of your own life that you have walled off. How has the fear of man overridden your vision of God's power in these areas? If you are in a group setting and feel comfortable, take time to share and pray with one another. If you are using this guide as a personal devotional, consider journaling a prayer to the Lord.

**Our Big Idea: Nothing stops God. Nothing. Not death. Not fear. Not your tomb. Nothing.** The Good News of the resurrection is not that we finally summon the bravery to unbolt our tombs. The good news is that God still moves stones we can't move! Easter doesn't start

with human power; it starts with Divine ability. Easter doesn't ask, "Why have you sealed?" It asks, "What can stop God?"

### **Closing Prayer**

Father God – thank You for the empty tomb! Thank You for Your unstoppable love. Nothing can stop you. Death could not stop You. Human cunning could not stop You. Our fears, doubts, failures, and worries cannot stop You. You are greater than all of it. We praise You and thank You for Your faithfulness and love. In Jesus' Name – Amen.

**Prayer Requests** (10-15 minutes)