

# All Hail King Jesus

The King is Risen

Matthew 28:1-10

April 5, 2026

## Introduction

When was the last time you visited a graveyard? A few of us may occasionally visit the resting place of a loved one, but even if you've been to a funeral recently, you likely did not attend the internment at the graveyard. It's our tendency to avoid graveyards if we can, but I grew up enjoying one particular graveyard in my hometown. One of my aunts and uncles that I visited frequently lived just on the other side of town and had a small graveyard behind it, and a graveyard like that is an excellent playground for young cousins!

- Running between the old headstones as if they were trees in a forest, darting in and out like it was an obstacle course.
- Playing hide-and-seek behind the different headstones, especially fun at night with flashlights.
- Chasing and trying to catch the many small animals like rabbits and chipmunks that lived in the graveyard.
- Reading the different epitaphs and coming up with fake stories about those people's lives.

For many of us, especially when we're young like I was in those days, death feels distant enough to ignore. Not so in the days of Jesus. For lots of reasons, the people of Jesus' day were less able to avoid the realities of death.

- Shorter life expectancies and higher child mortality rates kept the news or experience of death closer and more frequent.
- The dying process was far less institutional compared to our day. The dying process, the body, mourning, and burial were much more public and immediate.
- Public executions were just that: public. Jesus' death took place in a culture where state violence and bodily suffering could be seen with one's own eyes, and not infrequently.
- The way people grieved in Jesus' day made death more visible. Funerals, lament, burial caves, tombs, mourning periods, and public grieving all meant death was something communities processed together.

So by the time we arrive at Matthew 28, we are not looking at women who are casually visiting a memorial site. We are looking at women carrying the full emotional weight of death — fear, grief, uncertainty, and loss.

But they did not leave the tomb the way they came to the tomb. Likewise, I hope that we all leave differently than we came.

**(Slide)** If you'll stick with me through the retelling of this story, what you'll see is that ***the resurrection of Jesus replaces fear with hope, unbelief with faith, and silence with a story.***

## Body

### Replacing Fear with Hope

The first thing we see in our story is that the **women's fear was replaced with hope**. Look at vv. 1-4 with me.

***(Slide) After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it.***

***(Slide) 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. 4 The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.***

Consider for the moment all the reasons for fear to be present in these women.

- Social cost and perhaps physical due to their association with Jesus, now a crucified criminal in the eyes of most.
- A violent earthquake.
- An angelic being present before their very eyes.
- The behavior of the guards due to fear.

Fear dominates the first part of this story. But into all of this fear, the angel of the Lord speaks. Look at v. 5. ***(Slide) “Do not be afraid.”***

Now that is remarkable, because the angel does not say, “You have no reason to feel what you’re feeling.” He does not scold them for trembling. He does not shame them for being overwhelmed. But he does command them not to LIVE IN A STATE of fear. He speaks directly into their fear, not with words of empty reassurance ... not with sentimental optimism ... but with real, historical, life-changing news. Look at the rest of v. 5 and part of v. 6.

***(Slide) “Don’t be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said.”***

The command to not live in a state of fear was grounded in reality. They do not have to be afraid because God has acted. The tomb is not about to be the final word. Death is not going to keep Jesus. What looked like defeat was now revealed as victory. So the angel commands that the women replace their very real fear with a very real hope – Hope that Jesus really is King, King even over death.

#### Application

I wonder what fears you are carrying this morning. Fear about the future. Fear about your health. Fear about people you love. Fear about what happens when circumstances go sideways. Fear about death itself. What we learn in this account is that God does not scold us for having fears, nor does He meet them with empty cliché’s. Rather, He replaces our fears with the hope of the risen King.

*(Slide) The resurrection of Jesus replaces fear with hope because it tells us that God is more powerful than the grave, and if the grave is not final, then our fear does not have to be final either.*

Replacing Unbelief with Faith

But the exchange of hope for fear is not the only exchange that took place at the tomb. Not only was fear exchanged for hope, **but unbelief was exchanged for faith.** Look at v. 6 with me.

*(Slide) He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.*

I find this moment fascinating. The women are not asked to manufacture belief out of thin air. They are not told to ignore their questions, suppress their doubts, or pretend certainty they do not have. They are not told to take the angel's word for it. They are invited to look. To consider. To examine what God has done.

That is important, because Christian faith is not a blind leap into the dark. Biblical faith is trust grounded in truth. It is confidence rooted in the reality of God's action in history. The fear of the women was replaced with hope because Jesus has risen. And here, their unbelief began to be replaced with faith because the historical resurrection is supported by tangible evidence. The angel rolled the stone away not to let Jesus out, but to let the women in. Jesus was already risen. The open tomb was for them. It was for inspection. It was for witness. It was God's gracious invitation to see that death no longer holds the Son of God.

This is consistent with the whole witness of the New Testament. The resurrection is never presented as a vague spiritual idea, as though the disciples merely felt inspired after Jesus died. No, the claim is much stronger than that. The New Testament insists that Jesus truly died, was truly buried, truly rose, and was truly seen alive again.

#### Application

In the same way that the angel invited these women to exchange their unbelief for faith through the evidence, I invite you to do the same. Consider the evidence! ***(One slide with these 7 listed)***

1. **The empty tomb.** All four Gospels testify that when the women came to Jesus' tomb, it was empty.
2. **Women as the first witnesses.** The Gospels say women were the first to discover the empty tomb and hear the resurrection announcement. In that culture, that detail would have been unlikely to be invented, which gives the account the ring of authenticity.
3. **The appearances of the risen Jesus.** The New Testament says Jesus appeared alive to the disciples, more than five hundred people at once, James, and Paul. Christianity spread because people claimed not merely that Jesus inspired them, but that they saw him risen from the dead.
4. **The early testimony of the church.** In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul passes on a resurrection summary he had received earlier, showing this message goes back to the earliest days of the church. The resurrection was not a legend that developed slowly; it was central from the start.

5. **The transformation of the disciples.** Before the resurrection, the disciples were fearful, scattered, and hiding. Afterward, they became bold and public witnesses, and the New Testament explains that change by saying they encountered the risen Christ.
6. **The conversion of skeptics.** James, Jesus' brother, had not believed in him during his earthly ministry, and Paul was actively persecuting the church. Yet both became convinced that Jesus was risen, and both traced that change to an encounter with the risen Jesus.
7. **Jesus said it would happen.** The resurrection happened, as the angel says, "as he said." That means Easter is not only a display of power, but a vindication of Jesus' own words and a confirmation that he can be trusted.

All of this means that the Christian faith is not asking people to believe without reasons. It is asking them to trust the Christ who has given every reason to be trusted. The resurrection does not eliminate every question we could ask, but it gives solid, historical, biblical grounds for faith. It replaces unbelief with faith. ***As I have considered the evidence, it seems to me that the burden of proof is not on the Christians, but on those who do not believe. The most reasonable explanation of the empty tomb is that Jesus had been raised from the dead as the Bible teaches.***

The Christian message has never feared honest examination. The empty tomb stands as God's invitation to doubters, skeptics, and unbelievers alike. So if you are here this morning and you

find yourself uncertain, this text speaks gently to you. You are invited to “Come, see the place where he lay.”

***(Slide) The resurrection of Jesus replaces unbelief with faith not built on wishful thinking, but on a risen Savior who has left behind an empty tomb and a world full of witnesses.***

Replacing Silence with Story

So, at the empty tomb, fear has been replaced with hope, and unbelief has been replaced with faith. But a third exchange also took place. **The resurrection of Jesus replaces silence with a story.** Look at vv. 7-8 with me. ***(Slide)***

***7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.’ Listen, I have told you.” 8 So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news.***

Do you see the movement? The women came to the tomb grieving and afraid, found hope and faith, which turned solemn and grieving people into boisterous messengers of hope and faith. The resurrection of Jesus gives them something to say.

And that is still what Easter does. When Jesus rises from the dead, the good news is too good to keep to yourself. Christianity is not private inspiration; it is public news. Jesus died for sinners. Jesus is risen from the grave. Jesus is alive today. That is a story worth sharing.

There are joys in this world that, when we discover them, we want to keep them all to ourselves. I'm thinking of things like the last serving of blackberry cobbler at the end of the summer, or the last few french fries in your McDonald's bag (no food shaming, please). But the reality of Jesus' resurrection is not for our selfish enjoyment. It is for our selfless proclamation.

## Conclusion/Application

**The resurrection of Jesus replaces fear with hope, unbelief with faith, and silence with a story.**

*(Slide)* And these truths bring us to the question Easter always puts before every one of us: ***What will you do with the risen Jesus?*** This story is not here merely to inform us. It is here to confront us, comfort us, and call us. The women did not leave the tomb the way they came, and neither should we.

Maybe you would say, "I'm not really a Christian," or "I'm not sure what I believe," or maybe even, "I've been around church, but I've never actually trusted Christ." Easter is God's invitation to you.

The resurrection of Jesus means that your biggest problem is not merely fear, confusion, or a lack of purpose. Your biggest problem is sin. We have sinned against him. We have gone our own way. We have not loved God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.

And that is why Jesus went to the cross. He did not die merely as an example of love or courage. He died for sinners. He died in the place of people like us. He bore the judgment our sins deserved.

And when God raised him from the dead, it was the Father's declaration that the payment had been accepted, that death had been defeated, and that forgiveness and new life are now offered in his name.

So if you are not a Christian, Easter is not just a day to admire Jesus. It is a day to turn to him. To repent of your sin. To stop trusting in yourself. To stop delaying. To stop assuming you have all the time in the world. And to place your trust in the crucified and risen Christ.

The empty tomb is not asking you for polite acknowledgment. It is calling for a response. So come to Jesus. Bring him your fear. Bring him your questions. Bring him your guilt. Bring him your sin. He is alive, and he saves all who come to him by faith. ***If Jesus walked out of the grave, then you must trust him with your life.***

But let me also speak to the Christian in the room. If you belong to Jesus, Easter is not just something to celebrate — it is something to live. So Christian, where do you need this story to meet you today?

- Are you living in fear? Then hear the angel again: "Do not be afraid." The risen Christ still reigns.
- Are you battling doubt, disappointment, or weariness? Then hear the invitation again: "Come and see." Look again at the empty tomb. Look again at the faithfulness of Jesus.
- Have you gone silent? Silent in your witness? Silent in your joy? Silent in your gratitude? Then hear the command again:

“Go and tell.” The resurrection replaces silence with a story worth sharing.

The world does not need a vague spirituality or a seasonal enthusiasm. It needs people who actually believe Jesus is alive. People whose fears are being replaced by hope. People whose wavering is being steadied by faith. People who are not ashamed to say, “Christ has risen, and that changes everything.” **If the tomb is empty, then our mouths cannot be.**