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## Easter Sunday

This was the worst weekend ever. The disciples had watched their Master be mocked, beaten, crucified, and buried in a borrowed tomb. The dust hadn't even settled yet on the betrayal of Judas, the midnight trials, the shouting mob, and the dying Messiah. Things were dark. Spirits were low. Doors were locked.

But Jesus wasn't DEAD.

He was ALIVE.

And he had defeated DEATH.

### **Matthew 28**

<sup>1</sup> Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. <sup>5</sup> Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> *He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen.* Come, see where his body was lying. <sup>7</sup> And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you." <sup>8</sup> The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. <sup>9</sup> And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him.

*The beauty of Easter Sunday is that Jesus conquered DEATH.*

No other religious leader before or since has been able to conquer death.

No other belief system in the world claims to worship a resurrected Messiah.

*A you can't hold me down . . . Messiah.*

*A death isn't the end of my story . . . Messiah.*

*A you can kill me but my father will raise me . . . Messiah.*

Jesus said, "I AM the resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in me will LIVE." John 11:35 The resurrection of Jesus was the final proof that he was the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, the in-the-flesh Son of God who came to bring eternal life to all those who believed in him. Even Jesus said that the final sign of his divine authority would be his resurrection after 3 days.

### **Matthew 12**

<sup>38</sup> One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority." <sup>39</sup> But Jesus replied, "Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

*The entire Christian faith hinges on the TRUTH of the resurrection.*

### ***If Jesus DIDN'T rise from the dead:***

- > He's no different than we are.
- > He's the biggest fraud that ever lived.
- > None of his teachings can be trusted.
- > We're all wasting our time.

***But, if Jesus DID rise from the dead:***

- > We can put our faith in him as the Messiah.
- > We can follow his teachings with certainty.
- > We can have a personal relationship with God.
- > We can walk in freedom and victory.

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*But the Disciples still didn't know that Jesus was ALIVE.*

They deserted Jesus during the darkest hour, and now they were hiding behind locked doors. Words had been said. Tempers had flared. Belief had been lost. The whole message of Jesus had died with Jesus - or so they thought. Little did they know that Jesus would break through their prison walls of fear, doubt, and shame to finally set them FREE. They could have never imagined what would happen next . . .

**John 20**

<sup>19</sup> That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! He said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! <sup>21</sup> Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

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Jesus was ALIVE and he wasn't going to let his disciples live in FEAR and SHAME any longer. The same power that rose Jesus from the dead was the power that would set them free. The same disciples that had doubted and deserted would carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Hours after the resurrection of Jesus, he would once again bring peace and comfort to his closest disciples. In fact, he broke into the locked room on Sunday evening to remind them of 3 PROMISES.

## The 3 Promises of Jesus.

### Promise # 1 - "I am with you."

Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!

He said, "*Peace be with you.*" ~ John 20:19

"Peace be with you" literally means "Peace is joining you." Jesus joined them in the middle of their fear, their shame, their doubt. But he didn't scold them or condemn them for being afraid, instead he offered them PEACE. He offered them proof. He offered them himself. HE was the peace they had been looking for all along, and no matter how dark the situation seems, you can have Peace because Jesus is with you . . . right where you are . . . locked rooms and all.

### Promise # 2 - "I am sending you."

*"As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."* ~ John 20:20

The greek word for sending is the verb (apostello) which means "set apart or called out." The encouraging part of this story to me is that Jesus was sending them on a mission even after their mistakes. He wasn't looking for PERFECT followers - he was looking for FORGIVEN followers that were ready to go to the ends of the earth. Jesus never intended his disciples to create "holy huddles" of perfection . . . he was inviting them into the messiness of life. He was inviting them to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the least, the lost, and the broken. The mission of Jesus isn't about vocation its about location. Jesus was sending them to the EVERYDAY places of life with the Good News of the Gospel. He's sending you too! Are you ready to go?

### Promise # 3 - "I am filling you."

Then Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." ~ John 20:22

The Disciples had been with Jesus for 3 years and had never experienced what was about to happen soon. Jesus had promised them at the Last Supper that “he would be going away but he would leave the Comforter behind.” ~ John 14: 16  
They had no idea how much better the COMFORTER would be.

*The very SPIRIT of God would live INSIDE of his people.*

Everyday.

All day.

24/7

365

God’s Holy Spirit is our teacher, our guide, our encourager, and our comforter. He will never leave us or forsake us. He illuminates the scriptures, helps us fight temptation, and delivers us from the attacks of our enemies. He gives us strength when we’re weak, patience when we’re frustrated, joy when we’re in the middle of the storm, clarity when we’re lost, gentleness when we’re rough, and self-control when we feel out of control. Jesus made a PROMISE to be with us and the Holy Spirit is keeping that promise every single day - till Jesus returns!

**Ephesians 1:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Amen.