

WD April 5, 2021

Pastor Matthew Woods, Grace Lutheran Church

“O God, It’s Monday!” Matthew 28:1-10

<sup>1</sup>After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

<sup>2</sup>There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

<sup>5</sup>The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

<sup>8</sup>So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

### **“Read The Directions All the Way To the End.”**

Years ago, we had a thing called typing class in high school where we learned to type on things called type-writers—like computers without screens. I don’t know if they still have those classes or what they call them today—keyboarding or something. Anyway, to those of us who grew up in the era of the smart phone this is like talking about the days of Noah I realize but bear with me a moment. Some of us are old enough to remember—and by the way I type better than I write by hand any more. Of course, the teacher had removed all the correction ribbon so mistakes were hard to hide.

As part of our final exam we were given a two page, front and back, list of exercises we were supposed to perform using the full extent of our new found typing skills. Two pages?! “How in the wide-world would I get this done in an hour?!” I thought. Everyone was complaining about the amount of stuff to do but the teacher simply said read the directions and do the best you can. To add insult to injury, on the pages were things like type this sentence while making the shape of a tree and type this sentence backwards, and things like that. Quite honestly, it was impossible to do all the things on those pages.

“What kind of stupid test is this?” I thought. But something about this test made me wonder. The directions at the top of the test simply said, “Read through all the questions first before beginning.” So I did, I skimmed actually—through the directions. The last thing on the test simply read, “Now that you have read through the test simply type your name at the top and hand it in.”

“Really?” “This is too good to be true.” Suddenly I looked up and wondered how many others had already seen this. In a class of 25 or so I quickly realized I was the only one not typing. I read the last sentence again. “Yep!” “Ok!” So I typed my name and handed it in with a smile and a lot of other strange looks from the others. Within five minutes I was done with my final exam in typing.

As Christians the Bible begs us to look at everything in the same way. “Go to the end—read carefully!” “Start with the end—start with the resurrection of Jesus.” Start with Good Friday and then we realize the rest won’t count against us. Then we see our sin erased and heaven on the horizon. Then our hope makes sense. It’s already happened. Salvation is as good as done. But this doesn’t mean there won’t be obstacles that try to bog us down, overwhelm us, or keep us from reading to the end. Easter Sunday is great but we still got to go on living on Monday too.

### **All Heaven Breaks Loose**

That first Easter morning was rowdy. The women who went to the tomb Easter morning probably didn’t think of anything beyond anointing Jesus body. In their haste they realize they’ve got a big round problem—the stone. “Who’s going to roll away the stone?” The concern doesn’t stop them but I’m sure the violent earthquake gets their attention—they felt it before on Good Friday when Jesus died—as if the earth itself wept for her creator. Meanwhile before their arrival the Angel removes the stone and his appearance shakes the battle hardened soldiers to their core—making them like their victims—like dead men. It’s not said but by the time the women arrive these men seem to have gone.

Here is a notable distinction. The women like the guards see the same angel. His appearance was like lightening—like the glory described of Jesus at the mount of Transfiguration. The fear causes the women to bow down trembling but in humility. Whereas the guards were made like dead men the women were brimming with wonder. The experience made them ready to listen, in fact eager to hear the announcement that came next whereas the soldiers simply retreated. “Jesus is not here; He has risen just as He said. Come and see the place where they lay Him.” The women hurry away “trembling and bewildered” to tell the 12 disciples and run right into Jesus and all heaven breaks loose. Matthew 28:9 says, “They came to him, clasped his feet (literally seized His feet) and worshipped him.” And then instead of sending the angels to the disciples Jesus commissions His first witnesses to be the ones to report to the disciples. “Go tell my brothers...”

### **“Easter is Still True On Monday”**

We know what happens on Sunday. But then Monday comes and we need to be reminded to keep reading to the end. Babies cryin, kids fussin, bodies achin, bosses bossin, schedules demandin, worries wieghin, things breakin, along with all sorts of life happening. Easter is the promise of an everlasting God remaking us into people with a fresh start. Yet in the back of our minds some will linger with guilt over a life of unrealized dreams, or of a life of poor choices. Some will go on abusing their bodies with poor diets or substance abuse and we will go on not listening to our doctor’s advice. Some will hang on to your anger. Some of us will turn our employers into saviors and our comforts into idols. We will rip and run to baseball careful not to disappoint the coach. On Monday some will return to the relentless bully at school or to a feeling of anxiety about self or to a sense of dread about the world we just can’t shake. On Monday remorse will return over a failed marriage, or we will desperately try to revive a relationship we know isn’t good but it’s better than being alone. On Monday a few of us will have an important surgery or see a doctor...again. On Monday some go on mourning. On Monday the routine of things return. And we will be tempted to reduce Easter to yesterday. We will be tempted to tell ourselves that Easter isn’t relevant on Monday.

Oh, but it is. Jesus is still alive—your troubles and tribulations cannot kill Jesus a second time. Nothing can put Him back in the tomb. The disciples didn't go on without trouble after the resurrection. The Apostle Paul knew plenty of heartache and trouble in his time as an apostle. The world threw everything at them. But when you have the promise of the resurrection guaranteeing an eternal life those women, and disciples of Jesus were literally as much unstoppable on Monday as on Sunday. They could see the end game and they focused on it.

### **Set Your Hearts On Things Above**

Consider Colossians 3:1-4. I've saved it for last today because this passage like many others tells us to start with the end first. Verse one starts off with confidence in Jesus. <sup>1</sup> Since, then, you have been raised with Christ..." You know how this game ends. And in actuality it's not even a close one. Jesus allows Himself to be the one who takes on the foul play of the Pharisees who attempt to play by their own rules; who abuse Jesus, brutalize Him, try to marginalize Him, and nail Him to a cross. The Lord may have been treated like the visiting team but by the time He is done with this world every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the fact that Jesus is Lord of this house. The clock is running out on team Satan and his team. In John 10 Jesus, the Good Shepherd, reminds us that He lays down His life for the sheep on purpose; with authority to lay it down and authority to raise it up again. No one takes it from Him but he gives it all on His own. It's the Lord who sets the rules and by those rules Jesus dies and rises again.

Colossians then says, "Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." Christ, your treasure, is hidden--locked up safe where nothing can get to it as in a vault or safe. And finally, Colossians 3: 4 finishes the thought. "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory

We cheer for our team because we want them to win! Nobody I know of cheers to just play a good game, but to win. That's what I'm talking about here today. We are celebrating a big win—the biggest win ever. When Jesus rose from the grave we were given that big win. And that win is just as much a win on Monday as it was yesterday.

### **O God, Thank you for Monday**

So now what? Remember where we started. The Typing teacher said read the directions all the way to the end. We know how this ends or we wouldn't be making such a big deal about this morning. Now, the commissioning continues—the calling for us to tell others as those women did and the disciples after. Go and disciple...as we meet them in those routine places on Mondays and the days after. Monday after Easter has come the good stuff of Easter is here as much on Monday as yesterday. O God, Thank you for Monday! I've got another day in Jesus. Jesus is still risen! Alleluia.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Matthew Woods  
John 3:30