Series: General

Message: A New Normal Matt 28\_1-10

Text: Matthew 28:1-10

Theme: Easter

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Location: Christ Community EFC

He has risen, He has risen indeed!

The video we just watched was quoting from Luke’s gospel, but I want to take us to a parallel passage that is found at the end of Matthew’s gospel.

**So, if you would, please turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 28.**

Who would have ever thought that we would be celebrating Easter, you sitting in your home, or wherever you may be right now, while Pastor Luke and I are here in the CCC Live Studio, streaming our worship service.

Man! Have things changed.

I have to be honest with you, I keep finding myself thinking that I can’t wait until things get back to normal (whatever normal means).

But you know, there are events in life that so change things that we will never go back to “the way things were.”

In other words…welcome to the new norm.

We all have those events in our personal lives that change to trajectory of our lives forever; graduating from High School or college, getting married or sadly divorced, the birth of a child or when the last child leaves the home, or when the first grandchild comes home, changing jobs, losing a job or retiring, or the loss of a loved one.

These events change and mark our lives. There was life before this event and then there is life after.

Welcome to the new norm.

Then there are those events that change, not only our own lives, but the lives of those around us, our nation, the entire world.

9-11 was one of those events. Before 9-11 you could show up at the airport, right before your flight was due to take off and walk right out to your gate and onto your plan.

If a loved one was flaying their whole family could walk them to the gate, and meet them as they got off the plan when they returned.

This side of 9-11, we drop people off curb side and then pick them up at the curb, making sure we don’t park too long while we are waiting for them.

Welcome to the new norm.

Before Covid-19 you had to show up hours before your flight in order to work your way through the long security line.

Now, there are no lines at the airport because no one is flying.

I would say welcome to the new norm **but** we are yet to discover what lasting changes to our lives, society as a whole, will be as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I know we are beginning to have those discussions as we try to figure out what the new norm will be for our church when we are able to gather together once again.

As we celebrate Easter this morning we are celebrating the greatest, most transformative event in all of human history, indeed for all of eternity.

Life, on this side of the empty tomb is forever changed. The death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed everything.

Welcome to the new norm! He has risen. He has risen indeed!

So here we are, it’s Easter Sunday, and we are on this side of the empty tomb. What does the new norm look like on this side of the empty tomb?

Let’s read here in Matthew 28:1-8 “**Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.**

**2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.**

**4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.**

**5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.**

**7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”**

**8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples**.

**So, let’s look at what the new normal for the women who discovered the empty tomb looks like.**

Matthew mentions Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, but we know from the other gospels that there were other women there too.

These were the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. These were the women who watched from a distance as Jesus hung on the cross.

These were the women who followed Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb and saw where they buried Jesus.

And these were the women who rose early on Sunday morning and brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus.

Instead they found an empty tomb with the stone rolled away, fainting guards and a mighty angel sitting on the tombstone.

They were awaking to the new norm this side of the empty tomb.

What did this side of the empty tomb mean for these women? We can sum it up in three words. Joy, worship, and commission.

First they experienced joy mixed with fear. You might think that’s a strange combination.

How do you mix joy with fear, but let’s look again at verses 5-8:

**“..The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.**

**7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”**

**8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples**.

The angel shared with them the good news of Christ’s resurrection, and the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy.

The angel told them, “Do not be afraid,” but they were still afraid.

You would have been too. This angel had come from heaven fresh with the glory of God. His appearance was like lightning; his clothes were white as snow.

The tough Roman soldiers guarding the tomb were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

No wonder the women were afraid.

I believe they were also afraid because they just didn’t know what this all meant yet. There is always a since of fear as we step into a new norm.

They had come expecting to anoint a dead man’s body, and now the angel tells them Jesus is alive.

What did this mean for them, for the disciples, for the world?

And so the women hurry away from the tomb.

They are afraid, yet they are also filled with joy:

* joy at the sight of the empty tomb;
* joy at the good news that Jesus is risen from the dead;
* joy that Jesus is alive and going ahead of them into Galilee;
* joy that they will see their Lord again.

Joy mixed with fear. And this leads to: **Worship**

The second word describing this side of the empty tomb for the women is “worship.”

Look at verse 9: “**And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him**.”

And so the women were not only the first witnesses to view the empty tomb, and not only the first ones to hear the good news that Jesus had risen, they were also the first to see Jesus alive.

Can you imagine? Their whole world has just been turned upside down, but in a good way.

They are rushing, running to tell the disciples the good news, when Jesus himself meets them on the way.

“Greetings!” he said, just like it was any normal day.

But this is the new normal on this side of the empty tomb. Jesus is alive!

Every day is good news! Jesus greets you every day with his power, and love and forgiveness.

The women come to Jesus, they clasp his feet, and they worship him.

They worship their Lord who suffered so much for them and now stood alive and well on this side of the empty tomb.

This new norm also comes with a new **Commission**.

And that’s the third word for our women this morning is “commission.”

Look at verse 10: “**Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me**.”

Jesus’ resurrection is not just a nice story. Rather it is the basis for new marching orders.

The empty tomb is good news, and good news is for sharing. And so Jesus commissions the women to go and tell the disciples.

Later this commission will extend to the disciples and then to us, as Jesus commissions us all of us to go into all the world and tell the gospel, the good news of Easter that Jesus Christ is alive, the tomb is empty!

What did the new norm look like for the women on this side of the empty tomb? Joy, worship, commission.

It is the same for us today. We should be filled with joy that Jesus is alive. We should fall at his feet in worship.

We should go forth and tell others the good news of Christ.

**But let’s take a deeper look at what the empty tomb means for your new norm.**

Once again, we have three words to look at here: salvation, perseverance, resurrection.

First of all, salvation.

John 3:18 says this about salvation in Christ: John 3:18 “**Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God**.

When we come to the empty tomb of Jesus, we all come to a crossroads in our life. You have to make a choice.

Will you accept what Jesus did for you at the cross, His death burial, and resurrection-the empty tomb, and put your trust in him as Lord and Savior, or will you turn and walk away?

There is forgiveness, salvation and eternal life waiting for you at the cross and in the resurrection of Jesus.

The empty tomb is our guarantee for the offer of salvation that Jesus give us.

But you must embrace it. You must receive it.

“**Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.**”

There is salvation for you on this side of empty tomb.

Once you receive Jesus as your Savior, then:

Our second word takes on new meaning for you: “perseverance.”

Hebrews 12:1-3 says this about the Christian life: “**Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted**.

Receiving Jesus as your Savior is just your first step in living out our new normal on this side of the empty tomb.

Now that you are a Christian you have embarked on a whole new life.

The Christian life is not a one-hundred yard dash. It’s an all-out marathon. You are a long distance runner, and God has marked out the race for you.

How will you persevere to the end? How will you endure on this side of the empty tomb and live out this new norm?

There is only one way. Fix your eyes on Jesus who endured the cross for you.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

There’s one more word for you this morning to help us understand our new norm, and it is a beautiful one: “resurrection.”

Like the women at the tomb the new normal on this side of empty tomb for all of us is joy, worship, and commission.

The new normal in this side of the empty tomb is salvation, our sins forgiven and new life in Christ that is pleasing to God.

But there is one more aspect of this new normal for us, and that is resurrection.

Keep in mind that Jesus was the first to be resurrected. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:20 that Jesus “…**has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**”

Jesus is the first to receive a resurrected body. But you and I, as believers in Christ will too receive and new, resurrected body as well.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 Paul tells us: “**For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

**17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**

**18 Therefore encourage one another with these words**.

For the Christian we need not fear death, because death is no longer the end, but just the beginning.

Jesus conquered sin, and death and hell on the cross, and on this side of the empty tomb is the resurrection, eternal life in God’s presence in our own resurrected bodies.

CONCLUSION:

The tomb is empty. Jesus is alive. We live now in the reality of the new norm.

You can deny it, reject it, or ignore it. There are people who deny the moon landing and there are even some who believe the earth is flat.

But the truth is, we’ve been to the moon and we live on ball.

And the truth is, on that first Easter morning, the tomb was empty and the Son of God rose from the dead.

He did it for you. He did it to save you from your guilt and give you a resurrected life in Him and with God the Father for all eternity.

Romans 6:23 says this: “For the wages of sin is death.”

The Bible says there is a great chasm between you and God because of your sin. You can never bridge this chasm on your own, no matter how hard you try.

We cannot save ourselves, and if God never sent a Savior, none of us would ever go to heaven.

The wages of sin is death, eternal death apart from God.

But praise God there’s more to the verse: “**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**” (Romans 6:23)

We could never bridge the gap, so Jesus bridged the gap for us. We only have to trust in him to pass from one side to the other.

There are two sides of the empty tomb. On one side the wages of sin is death. On the other side the gift of God is eternal life. Which side are you on this morning?

Praise God he has made a way for you through the cross of Jesus Christ.

That is the good news of Easter. That is the glory of the cross. That is the new norm, the empty tomb promises.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!