

“Mary! Rabbouni!!!”
John 20:1-18
4/5/2026

(Show interior tomb He is Risen Slide)

Happy Easter!
He is risen!
He is risen, indeed!!

(Show interior tomb Slide)

During Lent, for the last 40 days or so,
Our congregation has been on the road with Jesus
As he made his way to Jerusalem.
Last Sunday, the story ended with the lifeless body of Jesus
Being hastily laid in a tomb after he was executed on a cross
It was a bitter, sad, heart-wrenching end
To that miracle-working rabbi
who we thought could have been the Messiah who saves us

Happy Easter!
Today we find out that the story does not end in the tomb
He is risen!
He is risen, indeed!!

(Show Jesus and Mary Slide)

¹¹ *Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb...*

She turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus.

¹⁵ *Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"*

Thinking he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him."

¹⁶ *Jesus said to her, "Mary."*

She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabbouni" (which means Teacher).

– John 20:11, 14-16

Can you even imagine the surprise
And the joy and the delight that was in Mary's voice

This beloved teacher of hers wasn't dead
This rabbi who just a couple of weeks before said,
I am the resurrection and the life
Is standing right in front of her – Resurrected!!

Try to imagine the surprise
And the joy and the delight that was in Mary's voice

How does that Easter hymn put it?
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

Mary was the first person ever
to experience the resurrected Christ!

Mary
Rabbouni!!

Wow!

(Show interior tomb Slide)

Today we celebrate that death is no longer the end of the story

On that Sunday morning about 2,000 years ago,
Death no longer was the final word

But here's the thing...

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I might not exactly be at the end of my active ministry career,
But I can see it from here.

And for 40 years or more,
I've been trying to convince people
about the actuality of the resurrection

But you know what?

I give up trying to convince people about the resurrection
If someone doesn't believe it by now,
There is nothing I can say to convince them

Although I **do** need to mention that
if someone predicts that they will be killed
and after three days be raised from the dead
If they predict their own resurrection from the tomb
And then they **actually pull it off**...

Well, I'd be inclined to take a closer look
at everything they said and promised
with a whole new appreciation

And most Easters,
I try to convince those who are not our usual regulars
About the importance of the Christian church
And about having a personal faith in Jesus Christ
Yet, every year when we get together next week,
And hear about the love and grace
Jesus shows to Thomas who admitted he needed more proof,
Well, we are back to the usual regulars in church

So, I give up trying convince people about the importance of faith
If someone doesn't believe it by now,
There is nothing I can say or do to convince them

But here is the **other** thing...

I will **never** give up telling people
of the extent of God's love for each and every one of us
and the welcome and the grace and the salvation
that Jesus freely offers to all

For example,
As Jesus was dying there up on that cross,
There was this convicted, guilty criminal hanging next to him
(Show Criminal and Jesus on cross Slide) w/ morph

⁴¹ *We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong."*

⁴² *Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

⁴³ *Jesus replied, "I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise."*

—Luke 23:41-43

Did that convicted, guilty criminal **actually do** anything
To earn that place in paradise with Jesus?

It was pure, free grace and salvation that Jesus gave to him.

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Or what about Simon Peter, that overconfident disciple?
Remember what he said hours before Jesus was arrested?

³³ *Peter responded, "Lord, I'm ready to go with you, both to prison and to death!"*

³⁴ *Jesus replied, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster won't crow today before you have denied three times that you know me."*

— Luke 22:33-34

Did Peter deny even knowing Jesus three times?

(Show Peter, rooster, and Jesus Slide)

Remember what happened at the **exact** moment
When Peter denied Jesus the third time?

⁷¹ *But he cursed and swore, "I don't know this man you're talking about."*

(Show Peter, rooster, and Jesus close up Slide)

⁷² *At that very moment, a rooster crowed a second time. Peter remembered what Jesus told him, "Before a rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down, sobbing.*

—Mark 14:71-72

With that predicted sound of that rooster,
Peter didn't finish swearing that curse on himself
And was saved

Jesus called it

But instead of letting Peter damn and damage himself
Jesus mentioned that rooster who would crow –
And Jesus saved Peter from himself
when that time would come the next day

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I could go on,
But those are just two examples
from the last 18 hours of Jesus' life

Yet these examples and so many more demonstrate
the extent of God's love for each and every one of us
and the welcome and the grace and the salvation
that Jesus freely offers to all

Even if we don't deserve it
Especiallly if we don't deserve it

I give up trying to convince people about the resurrection
If someone doesn't believe it by now,
There is nothing I can say to convince them
And, I give up trying convince people
about the importance church and of faith
If someone doesn't believe it by now,
There is nothing I can do or say to convince them

But I will never give up telling people
of the extent of God's love for each and every one of us
and the welcome and the grace and the salvation
that Jesus freely offers to all

(Show Still Doubting Slide)

So, here's the thing,
Even if you are not here next Sunday
to hear about the love and grace Jesus shows to Thomas
who admitted he needed more proof
That story we hear every year on the Sunday after Easter...

Even if you are **not** here in church next week,
Jesus will still be there for you

Waiting patiently for when you figure out that you need him

And I also pray that after I'm retired and gone from here,
The people of this congregation will still be here for you
If you ever have need to hear and experience more
About the love and the grace and the forgiveness
that Jesus has for you

(Show Jesus and Mary Slide)

When we, in a **new way**
find Jesus (who has been right there in front of us)
Well, it brings joy and delight like no one has ever known

(Actually, countless billions of Christians have known)

Happy Easter!

He is risen!
He is risen, indeed!!

(Response Hymn "In the Garden" # 314)



