

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

He is risen!

He is risen, and this morning we celebrate that Christ is risen in deed. Now in our gospel this morning, there are three actions that take place which indicate the difference that our risen Savior makes for those first witnesses of the resurrection. The women who went to the tomb that first Easter morning found an empty tomb, stone rolled away, two men in dazzling clothes standing before them. They heard those words "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Now we get those three actions

- 1) the women remembered the words of Jesus
- 2) the women returned from the tomb back into the world of the living, and
- 3) the women shared what they had witnessed

The women had gone through Friday night, the Friday we call Good Friday, they had seen Jesus hanging on a cross. They experienced Friday night.

Many people here this morning have also gone through a Friday night. Perhaps the Friday night of a terminal illness, the Friday night of unemployment, the Friday night of the death of a loved one, the Friday night of spousal or parental abuse. You've gone through Friday nights in your lifetime and you have come this morning to the place where you last saw Jesus, dead, only to be told "He is not here," and now we go back to the empty tomb and hear the words of the two men in dazzling clothes as they say "Remember how he told you..."

Our griefs, our pains, our feelings of satisfaction, our joys are all dependent on the events of our lives and in particular on the way we remember those events. And so the two men in dazzling clothes told the women to remember. Perplexity when they had walked into the tomb, awe, downright fear, all from an empty tomb. And so they will remember this morning, and this memory now has a place, a very important place, in the experiences of their lives. They will not forget.

And you and I, unclean, selfish, sinners though we are, are called to remember. Remember that we're sinners, selfish, unclean, who have fallen short of the glory of God. Remember the way we felt Good Friday night.

Remember the people across the world who are affected by drought, famine, hunger, starvation, disease, war and terrorism. Remember all those born in poverty every day even in our own country. Remember the bad times and bad news. Remember all this because as we remember Good Friday night, the night Jesus was hastily buried in a borrowed tomb after his crucifixion, remember it and hear and receive the announcement of the two men in dazzling clothes. "He is not here, but

has risen.” Because this makes all the difference in the world when you remember all that he has told you.

“If you continue in my word... you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” Free from the tyranny of Friday nights, free to return to a world in darkness whose only remembrance of Jesus is Friday night. Free to return and tell the old, old story that we have known so well, of Jesus and his love. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, who was beaten, mocked, spat upon, scorned and whipped, hung from a cross and pierced in the side. Free to tell the story of those shoulders made wide by a cross, who hung there and died and was buried on Friday night.

Because Friday night sisters and brothers, is only the dawning of a new day, the story didn't end there, death and evil did not have the last word. And this morning we stand, you and I stand, gazing into a tomb that has been robbed of its victory, death has lost its sting because Christ is risen in deed!

So in a few minutes as we hear those words “take and eat, this is my body given for you,” and “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.” And as we eat and drink we know that Jesus is with us, and so we are called to return to the world, to its darkness, and tell and retell the story that Christ is risen. You and I have a unique role to play, a commission, a great commission to share with the world, Christ is risen and we are to tell this and retell it, in word and in deed, in our actions, in our lives, you and I are instruments of the reality of the empty tomb, the resurrection, the reign of God. He is risen!

AMEN