

April 5, 2026 – Romans 8:31-39 & Matthew 28:1-10

The women go to the tomb while it's still dark. Jesus, whom they loved, has been taken from them in death. The voice that called them, the hands that healed, the eyes that looked upon them with compassion are now absent. Sealed behind a stone. Sin has done its work, as it always does. It divides. It isolates. It separates.

You know that separation well. Sin divides us from one another. Harsh words. Cold silence. Broken trust. Even in your closest relationships, you can end up with distance where there should be unity. Sin drives wedges between husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors. And even when reconciliation comes, the scars remain. Sin separates.

And then there's the greater separation. The separation that these women were dealing with. The separation of death. You stand at a grave. You weep. You remember a voice you won't hear again in this life.

We blame this on all sorts of proximate causes. Cancer. Heart disease. Drugs. Alcohol. Accidents. Criminals. But, ultimately, the cause is sin. Sin does this. *"The wages of sin is death."* And death isn't gentle, nor is it natural. It's an enemy. It rips apart what God created to be whole.

But even deeper still, sin brings separation from God. Sin doesn't merely disrupt human relationships. It sets you against your Creator. And then, having set you against him, it accuses you of being against him.

St. Paul says in our Epistle, *"Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?"* The reason he asks this question is because, if you're not God's elect, there are lots of things bringing charges against you. God's Law accuses. Your conscience accuses. The devil accuses. Your entire life is one charge leveled against you after another.

And left to yourself, the verdict is always the same: guilty. Condemned. Separated from God's love. Not just in this life, but eternally. That's what Hell is: separation from divine compassion. Eternity with only the unyielding, uncompromising justice of divine wrath and judgement. So the women come to the tomb carrying all of this. Grief. Fear. Loss. Separation.

And then suddenly the earth shakes. The stone rolls away. The guards tremble and crumble like dead men. And an angel speaks: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said."*

And everything changes in that moment. The resurrection of Jesus isn't simply a reversal of death. It's the destruction of death. It isn't merely that Jesus is alive again. It's that death itself has been conquered.

Sin has done its worst. Jesus has endured the sin of betrayal. The sin of denial. The sin of a courtroom filled with deceit. The sin of an unjust death sentence. And, more than that, he's carried all of your sin and my sin too. And He has prevailed. The grave could not hold Him. The separation of death has been ended. He who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life has found a way through the truth of the Gospel into life.

*"He has risen, as He said."* This in no way should be a surprise to them. Because His resurrection is the fulfillment of a promise He made. Jesus went into death knowing exactly what He would do. He entered the deepest separation, forsaken even by His Father on the cross, so that He might destroy it from the inside out. And now the tomb is empty.

Sin has lost its power to separate you from God. Because the penalty for sin has been paid, fully and completely. *"It is finished."* And if sin is paid for, then there is no condemnation. And if there is no condemnation, then there is nothing standing between you and God.

Which is why St. Paul can say with such certainty, *"Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised."* The resurrection is the proof. It's the public declaration that the sacrifice of Christ has been accepted. Your sins are forgiven. The separation is ended.

The women run from the tomb with fear and great joy. And as they go, Jesus Himself meets them. The living Christ stands before them. And what does He say? *"Greetings!"*

It's kind of a funny image. They're overwhelmed with fear and joy, utterly bewildered by everything that's happening. And Jesus shows up to simply say, "G'Mornin!"

It's an image of complete normalcy. Sin, death, and the devil are defeated, but His relationship with them is the same as it's always been. There's no rebuke. There's no reminder of their failures. There's no chastisement for their doubt and grief.

He greets them. He restores them. He gathers them back to Himself. As their friend. As their rabbi. As their Lord. The separation is over. He will be with them always, to the very end of the age.

And they respond with faith. They take hold of His feet and worship Him. Which is what faith does. It clings to the cross, in the confidence that our sin has died with Christ. And it clings to the risen Christ, in the confidence that because he lives, we will live again.

*"Do not be afraid,"* Jesus replies. *"Go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."* Brothers. The same disciples who fled. Who abandoned Him. Who left Him alone in His suffering. And yet now, in the resurrection, He still calls them brothers. He removes the separation that their sin had created. Which is exactly what the resurrection does for us as well. It reconciles sinners to God and to one another.

And, according to St. Paul, it keeps reconciling us. Because he doesn't simply say that Christ died and rose again and that's the end of his work. He adds that Christ is at the right hand of God *"interceding for us."* The risen Jesus is interceding for you. Right now. At this very moment.

The One who died for you is speaking on your behalf before the Father. The wounds in His hands and side aren't erased. They're the eternal testimony that your sins have been paid for. When the Law accuses you, Christ answers. When your conscience condemns you, Christ speaks. When the devil brings his charges, Christ intercedes.

And His intercession is grounded in His finished work. He declares what He has accomplished: this one is forgiven. This one is redeemed. This one belongs to Me. Your standing before God doesn't depend on the strength of your faith or your obedience. It depends on Christ: crucified, risen, and interceding for you.

And so Paul asks a question that's at the very center of both Good Friday and Easter: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"* Who shall separate you? Your sin? No. Christ has died for it. Your death? No. Christ has risen from it. The devil? No. Christ has conquered him. Your guilt? Your doubts? Your fears? No. Christ is interceding for you.

*"Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?"* These weren't hypothetical for St Paul. They were real trials that he experienced. That his readers in Rome had experienced. That you may have experienced or that you may one day experience. And the suffering of life hurts. It hurts terribly. It shakes your faith. It makes you wonder: *"Does God still love me?"*

But it cannot separate you from the love of Christ. Because that battle has already been fought and won. *"Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Nothing. Not even death. Especially not death. Because death itself has lost its sting by the resurrection of Jesus.

So when you stand at the grave of a loved one who died in Christ, you don't stand there as one who is separated forever. You stand there in hope. Because just as Christ is risen, so also they will rise. Your separation is temporary. Your reunion with them is certain.

And when you feel the weight of your sin. When you feel accused. When you know your failures, your guilt, your shame. You don't stand condemned. You stand justified. Because Christ is alive and interceding for you.

And when the world presses in. When suffering comes. When everything seems uncertain and unstable, you are not abandoned. You are held fast in the love of Christ. A love that has already passed through death and emerged victorious.

Jesus lives. And because He lives, you are no longer separated. Not from God. Not from one another. Not even from those who have died in Him. Nothing can separate you from His love. Nothing. Because Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.