

He is not here; he has risen; just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. (NIV84)

Theme: Jesus: Our Risen Savior.

1. He's not dead.
2. We won't die.

Death is not natural. When God created us he didn't intend us to die. His plan was for us to live forever. So he created us in his own image—perfect and holy, and without sin. But sin came into the world. The devil led Adam and Eve to doubt God and rebel against his will by eating the forbidden fruit. And with sin came death. So God sent his one and only Son, Jesus. But even Jesus died. But today on Easter we see that he is our risen Savior; he is not dead. And because he lives, we too will live.

It was just a few days ago that we saw Jesus hanging on a cross. Hung on that cross for six hours before he cried out in a loud voice and gave up his spirit. Later that day some Roman soldiers were going to break the legs of the three men on the crosses to speed up the execution process. But when they got to Jesus they realized he was already dead. So took a spear and stabbed his side. It likely pierced his heart for blood and water came flowing out. Jesus was most certainly dead. So Joseph of Arimathea took his body down. And with the help of a Pharisee named Nicodemus, the prepared Jesus body with spices. They wrapped him in linen. And placed him in a tomb. Then they rolled a large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. This whole time a group of women were there. They saw exactly what happened to Jesus and where they laid his body.

For the next couple days were not pleasant ones for Jesus' followers. Many questions would have poured through their minds. "How could Jesus die? Wasn't he God? Didn't he have power over death? He saw him raise people from the dead—on three separate occasions. Once he raised his friend Lazarus from the dead—and he had been dead for four days! But if he has power over death then why is he dead?"

What about our sins? If he is dead than he isn't the Messiah. And if he isn't the Messiah, he can't be our Savior. And our sins count against us. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, **if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.** And every time we go against God's will, we have to pay for our sins. And the payment God demands is death.

So what about our lives? What will happen to us when we die? Is this life all there is? Or will I end up in hell? How do I get to heaven? If Jesus didn't save me, than how can I save myself? I must I do in order to earn God's favor? Or is there no hope for me? Or my actions so horrible that there is absolutely nothing I could to be saved?

Jesus' followers had the same thoughts then as we do today. Early on Easter morning a group of women went to visit Jesus' tomb. They went their to finish giving his body a proper burial. But when they arrived they didn't find Jesus' body. Instead they found an angel. He looked like a lightening with clothes as white as snow. **Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.** They saw Jesus die. They saw where his lifeless body was laid. But he wasn't there. He had risen!

He was dead. But now he is alive. That unnatural separation of body and soul is only temporary. Death could not hold him. Death had no power over him. His lifeless body was lifeless no longer. He lives. He is God. He is our Savior. He is our Risen Lord.

He is not dead, but alive. And because he lives we will too will live.

Jesus' resurrection means that he is our Savior. So he did pay for our sins. His sacrifice was good for us. We are cleansed through his blood. God accepted Christ's payment. Christ's resurrection is God's stamp of approval. Not only did he approve of Christ's work of saving us. But now, through him, he also approves of us.

We don't have to worry. Our sins won't count against us. They will never return to haunt us. Instead they have been paid for. Washed away by the blood of our Risen Lord. We don't have to worry about earning our way to eternal life. We never have to wonder if we have done enough to please God. We don't have to be afraid that we

weren't doing the right things to make God save us. Because we can't. Because we don't have to. Jesus has done everything for us already.

And because he lives we will live. For Jesus' resurrection shows his power over death. Through his resurrection he defeated death. And he crushed Satan's head. Death couldn't control him. Death had no power over him. For he lives. Three days after he died he rose from the dead. And now he lives forever.

Jesus is the one that controls death. Just as he showed by raising others from the dead he raised himself from the dead. And he promises to raise you too from the dead. Even though you die, you will live. You may die physically, but live eternally. For on the last day he promises to give life to your lifeless body. He promises to reunite body and soul—bring them back to the natural way—the way God intended.

Death, then, is not an end. But it is the beginning of eternal life. So death is nothing to fear. Christ has defeated death. And he gives that victory to you. So instead of fearing death we look forward to our life. For it is the end this life full of sin, pain, and torment. But it is the beginning of eternal bliss—a life free from sin and its effects.

So as the angels told the women, **do not be afraid**. There is nothing to be afraid of. Christ is risen. Jesus lives. Your sins are forgiven. Eternal death has been paid for. Our Lord is risen. And so will you. There is nothing to fear. For it doesn't depend on you. On who you are or what you do. It all depends on Christ. He did everything for you. From dying to rising. And so nothing else matters. For no matter what happens in your life, through faith you will end up in heaven. And in heaven you will have a perfect life with our Risen Lord.

It is true, death is not natural. God never intended it to happen. But sin brought death. So God sent the remedy—his Son. He died and rose from the dead. Through his life, you have life. Even though you will die, you will be raised from the dead. Your body will rejoin your soul. So don't be afraid. You have our Risen Lord. And so you have eternal life. Amen.