

Portraits of a Savior; THE RISEN SAVIOR— Sunrise Service 4/5/26

The first Easter morning didn't begin with celebration.

It began **in the dark**.

“Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark...” — John 20:1

She wasn't expecting resurrection. She was expecting grief.

And many of us know what it feels like to walk toward something in the dark carrying grief instead of hope.

But the resurrection changed everything.

The Resurrection Is Not a Legend — It Is History

Paul writes:

“Christ died... he was buried... he was raised... and he appeared...” — 1 Corinthians 15:3–8

- He appeared to:
- Peter
- The twelve
- More than **500 witnesses at once**
- James
- Paul himself

These are named witnesses. Public witnesses. **Living** witnesses.

The resurrection is not symbolic hope. It is **historical reality**.

The Resurrection Is the Foundation of Our Faith

“If Christ has not been raised... your faith is in vain.” — 1 Corinthians 15:14

The resurrection is not one doctrine among many. It is the **load-bearing wall** of Christianity.

Because the tomb is empty:

Sin is defeated	Hope is alive
Death is conquered	The gospel stands

One Word That Changed Everything

Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. She thought Jesus was the gardener.

Then Jesus spoke **one word**: “Mary.” — John 20:16 And she knew.

The resurrection moved from **theological truth** to **personal reality**

Jesus didn't begin Easter morning with a speech. He began with a name. Her name. He knows yours too.

The Pattern of the Resurrection Life

Mary arrived:

In darkness

In grief

Expecting death

She left:

Running

Believing

Telling others

“I have seen the Lord.” — John 20:18

That is what resurrection faith does. It turns grieving people into witnesses.

What the Empty Tomb Means for You

Because Jesus is risen:

Your past does not define you

Your sin does not own you

Your grief does not get the final word

Your story does not end in darkness

“We too might walk in newness of life.” — Romans 6:4

Not someday. **Now.**

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you.

Your Sunrise Service Questions

Ask yourself:

Have I personally responded to the risen Jesus — not just the facts about Him?

Am I living like the tomb is empty... or like the stone is still in place?

What grief, fear, or habit is Jesus calling me out of today?

Who in my life needs to hear that the tomb is empty this week?

The Invitation of Easter Morning

Mary came expecting a body. She left proclaiming a Savior.

The darkness did not get the final word. The grave did not get the final word.

Death did not get the final word. Jesus did.

He is risen. He is risen indeed.