

Acts 10:34–43; Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24; Colossians 3:1–4; John 20:1–18

OPENER:

Friends, there is a weight that can settle on a life until it slows the soul, clouds the mind, and makes even simple faith feel hard... Some weights are too heavy to carry alone.

We know that weight in many forms: Sometimes it is grief. Sometimes it is fear. Sometimes it is guilt, confusion, disappointment, sickness, loneliness, or the quiet strain of trying to hold together what is falling apart. Sometimes the burden is physical. Sometimes it is mental. Sometimes it is spiritual. Sometimes it is all three at once. And often the weight grows heavier because of expectation: what we expect from others, what others expect from us, what we expect from ourselves, and what we fear God expects from us.

That is why Easter matters. Easter does not ask us to pretend life is not heavy. Easter does not skip over sorrow, shame, or fear. Easter meets human beings where they actually live. It tells the truth about the burden, and then it tells the better truth about Jesus Christ.

And between the weight and the resurrection, there is Saturday... A place where many people live.

Easter Saturday is the day after the collapse and before the dawn. It is a place of silence, confusion, shattered expectation, and unanswered questions. On that dreadful Saturday, the apostles' world had crashed down around them. The one they had followed was dead. The future they had imagined was gone. Their hope seemed buried behind a stone. They had watched Jesus heal, teach, forgive, and command the storm. They had believed he was the one. **And then came the cross.**

Saturday is what it feels like when what you trusted seems to collapse in front of you. Saturday is what it feels like when prayer has been prayed, tears have been shed, and still the stone has not moved. Saturday is what it feels like when you cannot yet see what God is doing. Not dead, perhaps, but not alive again either. Not faithless, but unable to feel hope clearly. Not outside the story but stuck in the silence.

Many people know what that day feels like. Some know it after the doctor's words. Some know it after the funeral. Or after the marriage breaks. Some know it after the failure they cannot undo. Or after months of anxiety, when even simple faith feels hard. Some know it because they have carried other people's expectations so long that they no longer know which burdens are theirs and which are not.

Saturday is when the soul says, "I do not know how to go forward from here."

And that is one of the mercies of Easter. Easter does not begin with people who have it all together. Easter begins with people whose world has fallen apart.

INTRODUCTION:

John the Apostle tells us that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb “**while it was still dark**” (John 20:1). That is more than a time of day. That is a condition of the soul. She came carrying sorrow. She came carrying confusion. She came carrying the terrible weight of love with nowhere to go. She was not coming with a sermon. She was not coming with confidence. She was coming with grief.

And if we are honest, some of us come to Easter like that. We show up, but we show up in the dark. We sing, but we sing in the dark. We pray, but we pray in the dark. We are present, but there is still a part of the heart standing at the tomb, not knowing what to do next.

Now, here is the hard truth Saturday exposes: there are limits to what we can carry, fix, explain, or control.

- We cannot talk ourselves out of grief.
- We cannot command fear to disappear by sheer willpower.
- We cannot heal guilt by pretending it is small.
- We cannot raise dead hopes by effort.
- We cannot make ourselves whole by trying harder.

At some point, the soul learns what it did not want to learn: **I cannot carry this by myself.**

That is not failure. That is truth.

A person can suffer in body, mind, spirit, or in all three at once. A person can be loved by others and still feel alone under the burden. A person can know the right doctrine and still feel the ache of Saturday. A person can want to trust God and still feel bent low by fear, shame, exhaustion, and uncertainty.

That is why we must tell the truth about **the weight**. If we rush too quickly to celebration, resurrection will sound like decoration. But when Saturday is told truthfully, Easter sounds like the power of God, and this is where the gospel turns:

- The answer is not a technique.
- The answer is not positive thinking.
- The answer is not, try harder, and maybe you can get back up.

The answer is the risen Jesus. He comes to people whose hope has collapsed. He comes to the grieving, the afraid, the ashamed, and the confused. He comes with forgiveness for failure, with love that outlasts loss, with presence that breaks through confusion, and with life larger than fear. What we cannot carry, he has entered. What we cannot fix, he has faced. What we cannot outrun, he has overcome.

SCRIPTURE TAKEAWAY:

Mary does not first receive an explanation; she encounters Jesus. She does not first get a theory; she hears her name. The turning point of the story is not that she figured it out, but that Jesus stood before her and spoke to her personally. He said, “*Mary*” (John 20:16). He met her in the dark and called her by name.

That is Easter: the announcement that Jesus is alive, and because he lives, the weight is no longer the final word.

Peter stands in Acts 10 and preaches that Jesus is Lord of all and that “*everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name*” (Acts 10:43). Notice that Easter is not merely a bare triumph. It is not resurrection floating in the air by itself. It is resurrection joined to forgiveness. That means the burden of failure is not final. The burden of guilt is not final. The past is not lord. Jesus is Lord.

Jeremiah speaks the word of the Lord to ruined people and says, “*I have loved you with an everlasting love*” (Jer. 31:3). That means loss is not the end of the story. Ruined places are not beyond God. A broken life is not beyond rebuilding. Easter does not only say that Jesus rose. Easter says that the God who raises the dead still loves with an everlasting love.

Psalms 118 sings, “*The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone*” (Ps. 118:22). Rejection is not the final verdict. What the world discards, God can raise up. What others dismiss, God can establish. What looked like the end becomes the place where God starts something new.

And Paul tells the church in **Colossians**, “*your life is now hidden with Christ in God*” (Col. 3:3). **That is one of the strongest Easter sentences in the New Testament:** your life is not hanging loose in the hands of circumstances. Your life is not finally secured by your performance. Your life is not at the mercy of every fear, every loss, every opinion, every failure. Your life is hidden with Christ in God.

So let us say it plainly:

- What we cannot carry, Jesus has entered.
- What we cannot fix, Jesus has faced.
- What we cannot outrun, Jesus has overcome.

And because he lives, a new life begins.

Now do not misunderstand that. New life does not mean Easter erases every struggle in a moment. New life does not mean every question is instantly answered. New life does not mean Saturday never happened. It means Saturday is not sovereign. It means the silence is not ultimate. It means the stone is not the end. It means fear is not lord. Jesus is Lord.

APPLICATION:

And this is where Easter moves from doctrine to formation. Life begins when our expectations are reordered under the living Lord Jesus.

- We stop asking other people to carry what only Jesus can carry.
- Stop asking ourselves to heal what only grace can heal.
- Stop making control our savior.
- Stop letting fear govern the soul.
- Stop building our identity on approval, performance, or outcomes.

Instead, under the living Lord Jesus, we begin to live from a new center.

Because Jesus lives, I do not have to be crushed by what I cannot control.

Because Jesus lives, I do not have to be defined by what I regret.

Because Jesus lives, I do not have to be abandoned in what I have lost.

Because Jesus lives, I do not have to be ruled by what I fear.

That is not denial. That is discipleship under resurrection.

And I think this is where the Easter readings are so pastorally wise. They do not say the human heart has only one need. They show us a cluster of needs that meet in Jesus.

What a person needs is to be known beyond confusion. Mary receives that when Jesus speaks her name.

What a person needs is to be forgiven beyond failure. Peter preaches that in Acts.

What a person needs is to be loved beyond loss. Jeremiah speaks that over a wounded people.

What a person needs is to be given a life larger than fear. Paul declares that our life is hidden with Christ in God, and Matthew tells the women, “Do not be afraid” (Matt. 28:10, NIV).

CONCLUDING

This is why Easter is not only about life after death. It is about the reordering of life now.

The living Jesus still meets his people, still speaks, still gathers, still forgives, and still gives life.

And that means we do not have to hide the weight in order to be faithful. We can bring it into the light.

- Bring him the grief.
- Bring him the fear.
- Bring him the shame.
- Bring him the confusion.

- Bring him the exhaustion.
- Bring him the pressure of being what others want you to be.
- Bring him the disappointment of not being what you thought you would be.

Because this is the weight we were never meant to carry alone.

- The gospel of this day is not that strong people can manage life.
- It is not that religious people can ignore pain.
- It is not that death, grief, guilt, fear, and confusion are imaginary.

The gospel of this day is that Jesus Christ is risen, and because he lives, the weight we were never meant to carry alone no longer has the final word.

And because he lives, the dark is not final, and failure is not final.

Because he lives, grief is not abandoned, and fear is not your master.

Because he lives, life can begin again under a Lord stronger than death.

So, if you have come here carrying weight, hear the good news. Jesus is alive for people in the dark. Jesus is alive for people whose world has crashed down around them. Jesus is alive for people who do not know how to go forward. Jesus is alive for people who have discovered their limit. Jesus is alive for people who need forgiveness, presence, hope, and a future.

And because he lives, the weight you were never meant to carry alone no longer has the final word.

Amen.