

## GOSPEL MESSAGE

April 9, 2023

### RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, EASTER DAY

#### The Stone-Moving Power of God

Special effort had been taken to seal up Jesus' tomb. Pilate and the religious authorities had taken great care to make absolutely certain there was no way Jesus' followers could move that stone themselves. They posted armed guards all around.

If they had had the technology back then, we could well imagine that floodlights, security cameras, and an alarm system would have been added to the tomb. But none of that would have mattered. For nothing in heaven or on earth could have stopped the stone-moving power of our God. An angel messenger comes in a brilliant flash to roll that stone away, and then he sits on it to share the good news that Jesus is alive. What had been intended by those who persecuted Jesus as a *period*—a full stop for the Jesus movement—becomes a *pulpit* for proclamation: “Do not be afraid!” (Matthew 28:5). Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

As we remember the story of Jesus' resurrection, we tune our hearts and minds to trust that this God who brings life out of death is still at work. What stones might God be moving today? Might we sense the Spirit at work in our lives here and now, rumbling the ground of our hearts and rolling away the messages of shame, fear, or rejection that have weighed us down? Might God be at work, rolling away stones of oppression and injustice in our world? Might we be sent, like these women, to not let fear rule our hearts, but to go, tell, and witness to a God who continues to open up a new future for us? Yes! The risen Christ appears to us today—present in word, and bread and wine, and water—ready to bless, nourish, call, and send. Nothing can stop this God. Jesus Christ is risen, indeed—Alleluia!

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