

Fear and Great Joy

Matthew 28:1-10

Setting the Scene

Matthew 28:1-4

Going to the Tomb

- » Mary Magdalene & Mary (the mother of Jesus) - early Sunday morning go as a memorial
- » Sadness is the mood
- » A confirmation that the powers of darkness rule the day

Approaching the Tomb

- » There is an earthquake
- » An angel descends and rolls back the stone to the grave and casually sits on it

The Angel

- » Radiant – clothes as white as snow – luminous
- » Displaying the presence of God
- » The guards faint from fear

The Angel's Words to the Women

Matthew 28:5-7

Do Not Be Afraid

- » Now – here in the moment
- » In the future - no need to be afraid
- » We can trust and find hope in the power of God

Crucified Jesus has been Raised

- » See the grave is empty
- » He has been raised (passive voice)
- » He has broken through the death barrier
- » Death is not the last word

You Have a Mission

- » Go and tell his disciples what has happened
- » You are to be witnesses of God's story

Going in Fear and Joy

Matthew 28:8

Great Joy

- » The women's experience upon learning of Jesus' resurrection – the one they love is alive - He was dead but now lives
- » The joy of zoé – eternal life
- » 'great joy' - as the angels announced at Jesus birth

Fear

- » There is still an element of caution – the old ways still linger
- » The voices of the world are loud and powerful
- » A symbol of the church in miniature

Jesus Meets Them

Matthew 28:9-10

On the Path

- » The women meet the resurrected Christ
- » Greet them with the word 'rejoice' (v9)
- » He comforts the women with his presence and touch

Jesus Addresses their Fear

- » He reassures and calms them (v10)
- » He encourages them forward – carry on with your task – we will meet again in Galilee
- » Don't let fear overtake you

Jesus Reassures Us

- » Even as Jesus travels with us he reassures us with his presence
- » Our invitation is to remain in communion with Jesus
- » Through prayer, praise, life in community we are strengthened in our perseverance

He Meets With Us

- » The resurrected Christ lives in us and meets with us as a community
- » Keep watch; meet Jesus who comes to us each day
- » Do not give in to distraction but stay focused – 'will one thing'
- » "All for you dear Jesus" (Henri Nouwen)