



## Sunday Sermon: Love is Risen – Similo Sanqela – 9.4.2023



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### Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God’s word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

#### Observation

Mary Magdalene and the ‘other’ Mary went to the tomb, early on that Sunday morning. It was customary to anoint the body of someone who had died and they had not been able to do this for Jesus. They had been unable to do this earlier because of the Sabbath on the Saturday. But now, on the Sunday morning, as soon as they were able, they went to the tomb together, expecting to find Jesus’ body there.

It may be, in their grief, they had not thought about how they would move the stone away, and had forgotten about the guards who had been placed outside the tomb. It is only Matthew who records the earthquake on Sunday morning before the women arrived at the tomb. This was the second quake which had occurred in a matter of days – the first took place when Christ died; the second when He rose.

The theologian Trapp states that the earth shook both at Christ’s passion (to show that it could not bear His suffering), and at His resurrection (indicating that it could not hinder His rising).



When the women arrived, they saw the stone had been moved aside and the tomb open and they could see an angel, dressed in shining white robes. The stone which had seemed to imprison the body of Jesus was now a place of rest, where the angel sat. It had not been moved away to let Jesus out, but so that others could see that He was no longer confined in the tomb.

The Roman soldiers were scared stiff and froze in fear. The resurrection of Jesus Christ terrifies those who do not believe in Him, whilst it offers consolation, comfort and hope to those who believe.

The angel told the women that Jesus had risen from the grave. Some may argue that others had been raised from death, eg the widow's son (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Lazarus (John 11:38-44), but these people would eventually die again. Jesus is the only One who was resurrected to eternal life in a new body. Jesus would eventually ascend into heaven where He continues to live His resurrected life as both man and God. Whilst it was a surprise for the women to hear the angel say this, he reminded them that Jesus had promised His followers this would happen.

It was easier for other people to accept the angel's message when the women passed it on because they had not just heard the message but had seen with their own eyes that what they were saying was true. Even so, some of the disciples ran to see for themselves. As they looked at the place where, just hours before, the body of Jesus had been laid, the message was there to be seen. God the Father had not forsaken Jesus; death itself was conquered; Jesus is alive!

The angel told the women to share the news with the disciples. These women had been brave enough to be seen going to the tomb, thus still associating with Jesus, and so they were the first people who were honoured with spreading the news. The angel assured them they would see the resurrected Jesus in Galilee when they and the disciples went there. Their relationship with Him would continue. As they obeyed and ran to pass the angel's message on – they met Jesus Himself.

Jesus' greeting to them was 'Rejoice!' For Jesus this was an obvious response to His resurrection, and the women fell at his feet and worshipped Him. Now they knew He is alive! He repeated the angel's instruction to go to the disciples, using the term endearing term 'brothers' and tell them the news. This was no reprimand, but reassurance that everything that had happened in the past was gone. This was a new beginning.

#### *Icebreaker:*

What 'bucket list' event have you dreamed of doing which has in fact been accomplished? How did you feel in the moment it occurred? How do you feel about it now? Does it seem real or unreal to you? What one word would you use to describe it to the rest of the group?

#### **Application**

- What act/s of service have you recently undertaken in Jesus' name? Did you enjoy doing them or were they a challenge? Did you complete them, are they on-going, or have you taken a break? Do you consider them to be your duty as a Christian, or are you doing them willingly? Why do you feel this way? What has love got to do with it?
- *'Many find themselves in the reality of Saturday without realising Sunday has come.'* (Maybe some even feel they are still living in Friday). Where do you see yourself in your life, in relation to the Easter weekend? How can you help one another to move to Sunday's hope, and joy from the sadness, darkness, imprisonment of Friday and Saturday?
- What does living in the joy of Sunday mean to you? The angel said 'Do not be afraid.' Are you? If so what are you afraid of? What changes might it mean for you to move from Saturday to Sunday?

What sickness, poverty, relational challenges, work issues etc may you need to leave behind? Are you aware of comfort zones of 'the same old, same old,' that will need to be set aside to move into the joy of resurrection, Sunday living? How do such ideas make you feel? The women's fear turned to joy and love when they saw Jesus. He restored all that was broken. Are you willing to let Him do that for you too? Why/why not?

- The angel's message, which the women were commissioned to pass on was one of joy and hope. Even Peter who had denied Jesus was included in the group to receive the news. How does your past hinder you in accepting the Word of life that Love has risen? Are you willing to leave Saturday behind and live in the power, purpose, meaning, joy and hope of resurrection Sunday?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

### **Prayer**

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, especially for any struggles in believing and/or accepting the gift of resurrection life and love; and in regard to other needs of the group.

### **Service**

You have received the message of the Good News of the resurrection from the Gospel writer through the women this week. Who can you share it with in your circle during the coming week? Commit to one another that each one will tell at least one person about the resurrection life and love in the days ahead and report back next week as to how the news was received.

### **Bibliography**

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/matthew-28/>