



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of April 9, 2023 (Matthew 28:1-10)

All Age Reflection:

All is quiet.

Only the birds are up to greet the new day. All is quiet.

Yet, two ladies make their way slowly, with faltering steps, to the place where shattered dreams rest, along with the broken body of a man, deeply loved.

All is quiet as the two Marys console each other, and edge closer and closer to a tomb, in which the body of Jesus lies.

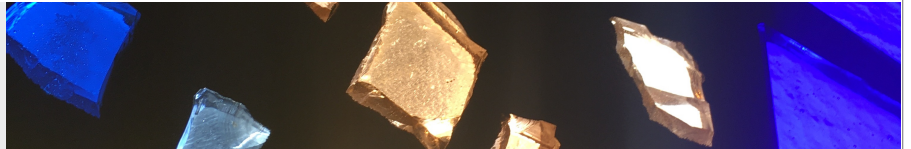
But then the silence is broken with a noise that is deafening and Earth-shattering—like an earthquake.

All is no longer quiet, the guards run a mile, fearful of what they are witnessing.

The silence is broken by the voice of an angel that speaks a promise; a promise that "He has risen from the dead"!

All is quiet no more.

Never again will the silence of the tomb be the final word...



Devotions for Life

Context: And here we are. Easter has arrived. The tomb is empty, Christ has risen, appeared to women at the tomb, and told them to go and tell the others. There is not much to say here in the way of context, other than, as the other Gospels do, we move straight from Jesus' Burial to Easter Sunday. The Gospels don't tell us much about anything that happens in between. There could be a number of reasons for this, but most likely it's that not much happened. Not much, other than a lot of grief, probably a lot of tears, and a lot of uncertainty about what's next.



But there is one thing that happens which only happens in Matthew: Out of fear of Jesus' predictions to rise on the third day, the religious leaders work with Pilate to see to it that the tomb in which Jesus was laid is guarded by soldiers. It's worth wondering why Matthew includes this

...The world from then, till now, and forever, is full of the ground-breaking noise of the angel's words -

"He has risen from the dead"!

Compassion & Justice

It's April! This month we are raising funds for Every Meal. This is an amazing organization that sets up kids with weekend food packs to help curb the lack of meals many kids experience on the weekends. Check them out at www.everymeal.org.



*(Prayer for Groups and Personal Devotion
©2015 Spill the Beans Resource Team)*

detail, while no other Gospel does.

But outside of this one detail, there is nothing else that we know about the space between Jesus' burial and his resurrection. That "nothing" that happens also has some theological and liturgical implications: It is to say the time between Jesus' burial and Easter morning is a time of death, stillness, nothingness. As he lay lifeless beneath the earth, the earth, and perhaps our souls, lay still and silent as well.

Read the Resurrection narratives carefully and thoroughly. We make a lot of assumptions about them as we tend to mash them all together. But each Gospel has just as many differences as they do similarities. Track every little detail, looking for what Matthew omits that other Gospels have, and what is particular to Matthew. Also pay attention to who is present, who is not, where people are, and the specific setting and times of day referred to.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. What words, images, or moments stand out to you in this passage?
2. What surprised you in this reading? Was there something that seemed missing or that you don't recall about the Easter story?
3. What time of day is it at the beginning of this story? Who is present at the tomb? How does the stone get moved?
4. Did Jesus literally resurrect from the dead? Why does this question matter?
5. How have you experienced resurrection in your own life?
6. Who are the first to witness to the resurrected Christ? Where are the 11 disciples in this story?
7. Have you ever been in an earthquake? What was it like? How is the life of Jesus like an earthquake for our souls?
8. Heading into our final Sunday in Matthew next week, what has been one big takeaway for you in this Gospel?