

EASTER

AT CELEBRATION CHURCH

IT'S TIME FOR SOME JOY

Matthew 28:1-9

Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb. 2 Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. 3 His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. 4 The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint. 5 Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying. 7 And now, go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see Him there. Remember what I have told you." 8 The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. 9 And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to Him, grasped His feet, and worshiped Him. (Matthew 28:1-9 NLT)

- **What would really bring me joy or happiness this Easter?**
- **The first Easter brought lots of joy to people who were followers of Jesus.**
- *"The women . . . were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message." (Matthew 28:8)*
- **Joy is something everyone wants to have but not many people experience on an ongoing basis.**
- **Anxiety, bitterness, criticisms, difficult people, discouragement, doubt, envy, failure, fear, grief, guilt, health issues, hurt, injustice, loneliness, problems, self-centeredness and _____ robs people of happiness or joy in their lives.**
- **Who or what most often robs me of joy and happiness in my life?**
- **Happiness depends on "happenstances" or the circumstances of our lives, while joy is something that can be experienced even during difficult times of life.**
- *Jesus - "I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" (John 15:11)*
- **Jesus wants to enable us to live joy-filled lives like the followers of Jesus did after His resurrection, even during trying times.**
- **We need to have joy in order to: 1) live an "enjoyable life", 2) be good witnesses for Jesus, and 3) survive life's struggles (Nehemiah 8:10).**

- ***What will help us to experience the joy that 1st century Christians had following Jesus' resurrection from the grave?***

Living A Joy-Filled Life Involves:

HEARING FROM THE LORD

- *"Then the angel spoke to the women. 'Don't be afraid!' he said."* (Matthew 28:5)
- **The Lord speaks to His people through His Word (Psalm 119:103-105), His Spirit (Acts 13:2), Mature Christians (Proverbs 19:20), Circumstances (Revelation 3:7), Dreams and Visions (Joel 2:28) and through Angels (Matthew 1:21).**
- Jesus - *"My sheep hear my voice . . . and they follow Me."* (John 10:27)
- **When the Lord speaks to us He often does so to help us conquer our fears (Joshua 1:9), give us direction (Proverbs 3:5-6), provide us with His help (Philippians 4:19), and equip us to live vibrant lives (John 15:11).**
- **To best position ourselves to hear from the Lord we need to be involved in daily prayer and Bible reading, weekly Church services, and regular connections with other Christians through involvement in small groups and/or ministry activities.**
- ***What steps do I need to take to better hear from the Lord so I can receive direction, help and blessings from Him?***

Living A Joy-Filled Life Involves:

BELIEVING THAT JESUS LIVES AND IS AVAILABLE TO HELP US

- The Angel - *"I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as He said would happen. Come, see where His body was lying."* (Matthew 28:5-6)
- **It must have been difficult for the Women at the Tomb to believe what the Angel was saying because they had seen Jesus die, but they and many others afterward had the opportunity to see and meet with the resurrected Lord Jesus.**
- The Apostle Paul - *"Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of His followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died."* (1 Corinthians 15:1-6)
- **Since Jesus has risen from the grave, God's Word tells us that we can experience forgiveness for our sins (Ephesians 1:7), freedom from our strongholds (John 8:36), fulfillment in this life (John 10:10) and the future of Heaven (John 14:1-3).**
- *"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by His great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation."* (1 Peter 1:3)
- **When we really believe that Jesus is alive and available to help us we will live with great expectation in regards to this life and in regards to the next life.**
- ***What changes have to take place in my life for me to fully believe and embrace what the Lord has said?***

Living A Joy-filled Life Involves:

CONNECTING WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

- The Angel - *“And now, go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead, and He is going ahead of you to Galilee.”* (Matthew 28:7)
- **The Christian life is to be a “shared life” - where we share our experiences, joys, resources and sorrows with one another.**
- *“All the believers met together and shared everything they had. . . . They worshiped together . . . , met in homes . . . and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.”* (Acts 2:44-46)
- ***What steps do I need to take to better connect with God’s people so that I can better experience the Lord’s peace, power and provision in my life?***

Living A Joy-filled Life Involves:

ENCOUNTERING THE LORD

- *“And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to Him, grasped His feet, and worshiped Him.”* (Matthew 28:9)
- **We can encounter the Lord today as we pray to Him, worship Him, gather with other Christians and serve Him.**
- Jesus - *“Where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”* (Matthew 18:20)
- **When we really encounter the Lord He brings joy, peace and purpose to our lives.**

So that I can live a Joy-filled Life, this Easter I’m going to:

- ___ **Accept Jesus as my Savior and Lord (John 1:12)**
- ___ **Begin attending Church regularly (Hebrews 10:25)**
- ___ **Connect with Others (*Life Group*) for support/encouragement (Acts 2:42)**
- ___ **Demonstrate my commitment to Jesus by being baptized (Acts 2:37-38)**
- ___ **Explore resources that help my relationship with Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20)**