**4/20/25**

**Easter Day**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 24:1-12**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

Welcome… Good Morning… Thank you for joining us physically in our pews or virtually out there on our conference call. We are indeed blessed to be together once again here this morning. Easter greetings to each and every one of you!

You know it would have been extremely easy to share the same exact sermon with you that I shared last evening at our Ecumenical Service at St. Simeon’s by the Sea in North Wildwood. The Gospel Reading was exactly the same. The setting yet different, was very similar, as we are gathered together here just like we were last evening as the church. However, today is a new day! We have moved past the dark and the shadows and the pageantry of last evening at the Easter Vigil into a new day, a glorious day, a day that we can indeed rejoice together that Jesus Christ has the final victory, and that death no longer has a final grasp on any single one of us, as long as we come to faith and believe.

So, with that being said here is a blend of the new and the old. Here is a blend of last night’s message with a little new and fresh take for today. Sermon two for Easter yet again had me nervous and concerned that the words I share with you would not be enough, or that they would not even be what you needed. However, I chose to take yet another step back… I allowed things to be taken off of my shoulders… I surrendered and allowed things to be on the very shoulders of the one who they should be… I handed things over and our Triune God put things on His shoulders. I again quit making this about what I said or even how it affected you… I left everything up to God to touch your hearts and minds in only the way and fashion that He could. So, let’s get to it! Let us be the people of God and dig into scripture here this morning.

With that being said, we are also going to keep things rather simple here… We are going to focus on the Gospel Reading that you just heard a few moments ago. For we have all now traveled through Lent… we have all now traveled through the Three Days… and we are now precisely where we all wanted and hoped that this continued journey would bring us at this very moment in 2025. We have made it to the very Easter Revelation that He is no longer in the tomb… that He is no longer bound by death… and most importantly… that everyone and anyone can carry out this message so that all can hear it and truly come to faith and believe. Yes… I made no mistake or error there… I said and I meant that everyone and anyone can carry out this message to the world!

For we all really do know that the life of Jesus was different, it of course was countercultural through and through. Following his very death and being locked up in the tomb the women are out and going about their ordinary business. They are doing what anyone would be doing following the death of one of their friends and loved ones. The women are paying respect as they are taking the spices that they had prepared for Jesus to the tomb. They are going to the very body that all past experiences and common knowledge would lead them to believe was still laying there wrapped in grave clothes. However, who would know that Jesus was cooking up something holy and entirely different?!?! Who would know that these women would have an entirely different encounter and occurrence than they could ever have imagined? Who would know that they would not need to find help, or beg the guards who were supposed to be there and guarding the tomb to open it up and let them in? Who would know that two characters in dazzling clothes would be there to greet them at an open tomb? Who would know that these women who were doing an ordinary but extraordinary thing for Jesus would have the experience of a lifetime? Who would know that these women would be called into the very mission and ministry that each and every one of us is called into? That being the very ministry of presence and proclamation… That being the very ministry of being part of community.

After all… We are the Church is not just something cute that I say or put in the newsletter or bulletin from time to time. We are the Church is not constrained to one building, one congregation, one denomination, one affiliation, or one anything! We are the Church is the life and the ministry of all believers. We are the Church extends far past any boundaries or barriers. We are the Church is you and I, and God is calling each and every one of us, not just on Easter morning, but at every hour and every single moment of every single day. He does not want you or I to have to face the defeat of death. He does not want you or I to feel that sting. He has defeated all of that for you and for I, and He wants us all to truly live and share life with others.

So, as we go out and share that life with others just the same as these women who experienced things at the tomb. We come to learn that these women’s experience was no “idle tale” as scripture puts it… for if we really dig in and focus just a little bit more on the Word then we come to notice in that very same verse that it also says “seemed.” Of course this was something that never happened before! Jesus may have told all of His followers, all of those in the temple and around, precisely what would happen several times over the course of His life and His ministry. However, it had never been done before. No one had experienced it! His words were clearly above everyone’s head, their mindset, and their total comprehension at that time. However, now it was real! All Jesus had told them had come to complete and total fruition.

So, we can all forget the concept that gets painted over and over again. We can reject that very concept that Peter ran to that tomb just to validate the message that these women had brought back to him and all the other disciples. We can all forget the concept that only a man’s word was valid at that time, or even now at this very moment in 2025. We can forget the concept that Peter did not believe these women. However, what we can really do is take special notice and pay attention to the very fact that Peter was the only one willing to actually get off of his butt!!! Peter was actually willing to go out there and experience and see this amazing feat for himself! Peter was no longer denying Jesus Christ in his darkest hour… Peter was playing another significant role… Peter was no longer in doubt here… Peter was in total and utter belief!!! We all know that seeing is believing… and that is precisely what Peter went and did! That is also why he went home amazed at what had happened. Peter was not keeping the message to himself as one may think, he actually had to sit down and take all of this in. Peter had come to the very visual realization that what these women had already proclaimed and shared which was indeed the true and total message. Christ was no longer in the burial clothes… Christ was no longer in the tomb… Christ had risen indeed, just like He had been telling everyone He would do. The very words He spoke to them over the course of His life and ministry had come flooding back into all of their memories because it was now real… it had happened!

Total compassion and forgiveness, love and humility, grace and mercy were and continue to be on full display, and are delivered to each and every one of us. For Jesus lived out scripture fully and completely. He held nothing back, and did not swerve or take power into his own hands. Death and life contended and Jesus had the final victory. As we come to faith and believe, or even when we come to faith and believe, then we realize that everything He did was so genuine, it was so awe inspiring, it was ever so impactful. When we all hear and experience this entire story year after year, I just do not know how it does not bring a tear to one’s eye… I just do not know how it does not cause one’s heart to flutter… I just do not know how the very life and ministry of Jesus creates any doubt or disbelief in anyone… I just do not know how it does not have any of us springing up and running out of these very pews or off of this conference call so excited to share this very story and this good news with everyone that we come in contact with. Yes, that would indeed be a little radical and awkward, but that is what we do as an Easter people. We rejoice and celebrate. We share and believe that victory is ours because Jesus has secured it through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

So, as we close things off here this morning let me just share another little snippet of my mindset, and the mindset that we all have whether we realize it or not. For at one time or another we all have come to know that the history and the accounts that we read and hear by no mistake are similar, but yet… ever so different. For if one would have four of the same exact Gospel accounts then we would come to believe that they were conspired in some way, shape, or form. One might even come to believe that the story was not even true. One would come to believe that the corroborated story of Jesus Christ’s life, death, and resurrection were just some clever ruse. However, through faith and belief, through reading and exploring scripture, we know that they are not! Nothing was spared, not even a single detail. We get several amazing accounts in scripture, and we are encouraged to read through them all and study them time and time again. We are called to dive in and explore our faith more and more. That is the true and ever-present blessing of being together in community as well. That is the ever-present blessing of all of us being together under one roof this morning. That is the ever-present blessing of being able to go out to share and proclaim this word and this experience with others. “It is also an occasion for the church to claim the resurrection promise that God is making all things new, beginning with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.” (7) Let me repeat that, “God is making all things new!” You and I, our friends and family, those out there in Wawa or CVS that we may have never met yet, all of creation. “God is making all things new!”

So, with all that we have heard and experienced yet again on this Easter morning 2025, let us continue to rejoice and proclaim out there, and not just in here, let us go out and rejoice and proclaim with others that… Jesus Christ is Risen… **He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!**

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 April 19th, 2025—April 20th, 2025

 Resurrection of Our Lord

 Vigil of Easter—Easter Day

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Resurrection of Our Lord

 An embodied resurrection requires that continuity and change be held together

 April 20, 2025

 Commentary on Luke 24:1-12

 Jerusha Matsen Neal

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Resurrection of Our Lord

 The narrative of the empty tomb signifies overturned expectations, hope renewed,

 and an invitation to participate in God’s ongoing narrative through Jesus Christ who

 is risen.

 April 21, 2019

 Commentary on Luke 24:1-12

 Holly Hearon

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Easter Vigil

 What we seem to have here is a discounting of eye witness testimony.

 March 26, 2016

 Commentary on Luke 24:1-12

 Michael Joseph Brown

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Resurrection of Our Lord

 Each of the four Resurrection narratives goes its own way in details, but there are

 three elements that they all have in common: (1) the discovery of the empty tomb

 takes place on a Sunday morning; (2) Mary Magdalene is present at the tomb; and

 (3) the tomb is found to be empty.

 March 31, 2013

 Commentary on Luke 24:1-12

 Arland J. Hultgren

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

 Resurrection of Our Lord (Year C)

 Preaching at Easter has its unique challenges and opportunities.

 April 4, 2010

 Commentary on Luke 24:1-12

 Craig R. Koester

(9) SermonCentral.com

 Impossible

 Contributed by Mari Larson on Nov 28, 2017

 Scripture: Luke 24:1-12

 Denomination: Lutheran

**Luke 24:1-12 (NRSVUE)**

Evidently expecting to find Jesus’ corpse, some of the women among his followers go to the tomb with embalming spices. After a perplexing encounter with the empty tomb and angelic visitors, the women become the first to proclaim the amazing news of resurrection.

1 On the first day of the week, at early dawn, [the women] went to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in they did not find the body. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5 The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again.” 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.