

Easter Sunrise Sermon, April 5, 2026

Text: John 20:1–10

Title: "Running to the Risen Lord"

Introduction

Good morning, friends. As the sun rises over the river, painting the world with light, we reflect on the moment when Peter ran. After Mary Magdalene came to the disciples with the news of the empty tomb, it was Peter who leapt into action. Imagine him in that moment: fear, shame, longing, and hope all intertwined.

Peter, who had denied Jesus three times, now runs toward Him. His feet carry more than flesh—they carry a heart burdened with guilt and yearning. Easter morning is not only a celebration of resurrection; it is a story of grace, repentance, and new beginnings.

First Point: The Burden of Denial and the Yearning for Restoration

Peter had denied Jesus three times. He had sworn he would never abandon Him, and yet he had failed. That guilt weighed heavily on his heart. But when Mary Magdalene told him, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him," something stirred in Peter's spirit.

His heart cried out: "***I need to see Him. I need to know He is alive.***" The empty tomb became a place of reckoning—a mirror for his regret and a doorway to hope. Peter's run tells us that even in our failures, longing for Christ draws us forward. Easter begins in the very human place of guilt, yearning, and desire for restoration.

Second Point: Running Toward the Risen Lord — Repentance in Action

Peter's running was more than haste; it was repentance embodied. He had denied Jesus, yet now he

runs with courage, humility, and faith. He stoops to look into the tomb. He sees the linen cloths, the burial wrappings—signs of resurrection, not of death.

Here, Peter's heart begins to rise as his feet have. The risen Christ meets those who seek Him—even those weighed down by failure. Peter's action models something profound: repentance is not only confession; it is turning, moving, running toward grace. Easter is the day God meets us where we are and invites us to rise with Him.

Third Point: Resurrection and New Discipleship

The empty tomb transforms Peter. The man who denied his Lord is now a disciple renewed. The resurrection is not only Christ's victory over death—it is Peter's victory over fear, shame, and doubt. His journey into the tomb anticipates the life he will now live bold, faithful, and committed to the mission of Christ.

Easter invites each of us to this same resurrection. Our past failures, our doubts, our denials, they do not define us. When we run toward Jesus, repent, and open our hearts, He meets us and calls us into new discipleship, full of purpose, hope, and courage.

Conclusion

As the sun rises over the river this morning, imagine Peter running. His legs carry a heart burdened with guilt yet racing toward hope. The empty tomb is a place of forgiveness, renewal, and beginning.

Today, Christ calls each of us to run—to leave behind fear, shame, and regret—and to encounter Him alive. Like Peter, let us rise into new life, new purpose, and a renewed discipleship. The tomb is empty. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.

Amen.

