

# THE MESSAGE

**Key Verse: Mark 16:1-8**

**Key Thought: Resurrection**

## WHAT THE BUNNY WON'T TELL YOU

If you've been to a store lately, you know that we have commercialized Easter as much as we have commercialized Christmas. And just as Santa Claus is the world's symbol of Christmas, the Easter Bunny is the world's symbol for Easter.

I will agree that it's fun to receive and eat chocolate Easter Bunnies, Mini Eggs, candy chicks and jellybeans. And I'll agree that the Easter Bunny is a likeable enough character. But I can't figure out what positive message the Easter Bunny has. In fact, my problem with the Easter Bunny is not in what he says, but what he doesn't say. He doesn't give a true picture of the real meaning of Easter.

I want to share with you four things that the bunny won't tell you about Easter that you need to know. If you don't know these four things about Easter, you will not have a full understanding of Easter and that could be permanently fatal.

### **THE BUNNY WON'T TELL YOU:**

**THE PRICE OF EASTER**

**THE POWER OF EASTER**

**THE PROMISE OF EASTER**

**THE PRIORITY OF EASTER**

God did not send a bunny to relay this message. Instead, this message that can change the world is sent to us by His angel.

Throughout the Bible, God used angels to make special announcements to humans. For instance, He used an angel to:

1. Send a message of destruction to Lot in Sodom – Genesis 19
2. Announce the birth of Samson – Judges 13
3. Announce the birth of John the Baptist – Luke 1
4. Announce the conception of Christ – Luke 1:11
5. Announce the birth of Christ – Luke 2:8-14

It seems that when God has an announcement of extreme importance, He often sends that message through an angel. From reading the Bible, it kind of makes you wonder if angels ever get a day off! In our text, we are presented with an angel that made an announcement that still echoes throughout the universe almost 2,000 years later. It is **this special message** from that Easter angel that I want us to consider this morning.

On that first Easter morning, as dawn was breaking on a world that was forever changed, a special angel delivered a special message, a message that is still vital today. Let's take just a few moments to hear the message of the Easter angel.

Fear and dread filled the hearts of this little band of women as they made their way through the still and dark streets of Jerusalem early that Sunday morning. They were going to the tomb of the man they had all believed to be the Messiah, the man for whom they had left all other things behind. They were going to the tomb of a man who had promised life to all who came unto Him, but who was now, Himself, dead. Certainly, they were confused and confounded as they came near the tomb. They were also concerned about the huge stone that covered the door into the tomb. How would they ever gain access to the body? How could these three women ever hope to move a stone that weighed several hundred pounds? Yet they proceeded, carried along by their tender mission, that of finishing the preparations for burial of the body of Christ. As they came within sight of the tomb, they were astounded to see the stone rolled away and the Roman guards lying like dead men all around the mouth of the tomb. Seeing this, they ran to the tomb and looked in, only to find that the body of Jesus was gone. What fear must have gripped their hearts! Perhaps they feared that the Jewish rulers or the Romans had taken the body to prevent His Disciples from faking His resurrection. Maybe they suspected that grave robbers had taken the body and would use it in some extortion plot. Whatever the doubts and concerns that may have filled their hearts, they were short lived. Because, suddenly, the women noticed a "young man" sitting upon the stone, (**Matthew 28:2-3**). This angel sees their fear and begins to speak to them. In doing so, he delivers a message of hope that still has the power to change lives this morning.

NOW, Let's bring this into the context of today. There are many around us, neighbours, friends, family, who are in a tomb of grief, despair, feeling that life is hopeless. Sometimes we are there ourselves. In those times, people sometimes wonder whether God is present with them. A story of a friend's experience, their world turned upside-down. That real-life situation echoes so many experiences of life. Each one of you will know in your own life, the times where you feel your world has been turned upside down. On a larger scale, we react with horror at the gassing of people, including children, in Syria. Or the violence and fear that has erupted in Ukraine.

Because Jesus suffered, we know that He identifies with our suffering. In our human situations and experiences of life, we are often caught in periods of trial, which we endure waiting for hope to come, waiting for healing from illness, waiting for situations to be reversed or to improve, waiting for relief from despair. It's like living between Good Friday and Easter Day. We wait for new life to come. In that waiting, we have glimpses of resurrection, and sometimes stunning experiences of resurrection, when Jesus comes alongside us to give comfort and strength. It is safe to say the world is seeking a true sense of peace and truth. Today I want to share with you the TRUTH of "The Message".

### **I. THE MESSAGE OF PEACE ("Be not Afraid")**

The fear these ladies must have felt upon seeing the angel. But what grace that the first words from his lips are words of peace. Yet, this is how the Lord always deals with His people. It is very appropriate that His resurrection should be attended with a message of peace. Because after 2,000 years, His resurrection from the dead is still bringing that same message of peace to the hearts of all who believe in Him!

Notice just a few areas of life where His resurrection gives peace:

Salvation – *Hebrews 7:25*

Death – *John 11:25-26*

Eternity – *Revelation 1:13-18*. He is alive and waiting on His children to come home!)

Life Itself – *John 14:16-18*

***I don't know about you folks, but those things give me true peace of heart !***

## **II. THE MESSAGE OF POWER ("He is Risen!")**

Jesus wasn't the first man to get up from the dead, (Lazarus – *John 11*; The Widow of Nain's son – *Luke 7*; Jairus' daughter – *Mark 5*), but He was the first to ever get up to die no more! All the others were just resuscitations, Jesus accomplished a true resurrection.

Because He was able to conquer death, all those who receive Him as their personal Saviour become partakers of that same resurrection power. At the very moment of salvation, His resurrection is accredited to us, and we become alive in Him. (*Romans 6:8*; *2 Timothy 2:11*) This is that "abundant life" which Jesus spoke of in *John 10:10*.

All this great resurrection power will be ultimately realized when Jesus returns and raises the dead in Christ. Imagine all those departed saints resurrected from the dead and glorified to live forever with Jesus! What a day that will be just doesn't do it justice!

If God's people will take the time to look around them and see what the Lord has done in saving the lost and changing the lives of the redeemed, it becomes plain that the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus is active all around us today. Every redeemed sinner is a testimony to the life-changing, life-giving power of the risen Christ. After all, a dead man doesn't have the power to change anyone! But a living Lord can work miracles in any wrecked and ruined life. (*1 Corinthians 5:17*)

Not only is it a message of Peace and Power, it is also.....

## **III. THE MESSAGE OF POTENTIAL ("He is not Here!")**

After Jesus rose from the dead, He immediately disappears and appears to be busy doing something important. His appearance to Mary Magdalene (*John 20:11-18*) Interesting to note that Jesus forbids Mary from touching him that morning because He was on His way to the Father.

As The Great High Priest, Jesus would be the One required to make the offering of the blood upon the mercy seat that would atone for the sins of the world. It seems that that is what Jesus was doing that morning in His absence from the tomb. I can just imagine the great praise that must have filled Heaven when Jesus placed His Blood upon the mercy seat!

This work of the risen Lord is forever finished; however, do not think for a minute that Jesus is not busy this morning. He is still alive, and He is still active on our behalf.

He is:

- Acting as our Intercessor – *Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34*
- Watching over us always – *Hebrews 4:13*
- Acting as our Advocate – *1 John 2:2*
- Preparing a place for Us – *John 14:1-3*
- Waiting for the Father to send Him after His Children – *Hebrews 10:13*

Jesus shares a common trait with every other living thing this morning; He is active. But His activity is all for the benefit of His people!

Not only is it a message of Peace, Power, and Potential, it is...

#### **IV. THE MESSAGE OF PROMISE( "Ye shall see Him")**

The angel closed his message to these women by reminding them of the Lord's promise. They would see him again. This word from the Lord must have lifted their hearts. They had come to the tomb that morning expecting to see a dead body, they left it with the promise that they would look upon His living face. ***Can you imagine their excitement?***

We have a promise that may be just a bit better. You see, we too shall see His face, (*Revelation 22:4*) not in Galilee, but in Glory!

In fact, we will see Him first in the clouds above the earth, then, we will see Him returning in glory, (*Revelation 19:11-16*) Then, we will see Him ruling this earth as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (*Revelation 19:15*). Then, we will see His face forever in all His glory in Heaven above.

I don't know about you, but Jesus will be Heaven enough for this old sinner saved by grace! When we see Him, we will forever be reminded of the awful price He paid for us at Calvary! He is still a "Lamb as it had been slain!" And, forever, in His body, He will bear the marks of His love for us!

Heaven will be wonderful because we will get to see Jesus. What we deserved!

In closing, I want to witness to the Easter angel who preached a powerful message don't you think? I am personally convinced that this is the most important message ever delivered by an angel to humanity. I just praise the Lord this morning that I know Jesus in a personal way and that I am saved. How about you? Do you know Him? He is still saving souls today! He is still blessing hearts today! He is still filling His servants today! ***How can this be? Because He lives!*** Because what the angel said is still true, ***"He is risen, He is not here!"*** To that, I say "Glory to God!" Do you need something from the living Christ this morning? If so, then come and get it! He lives for you!

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Place: FCA

Time: 10:30am

Date: Resurrection Sunday, April 9, 2023

After Service Song: Forever (We Sing Hallelujah)