

## ***As He Said***

If you know how it ends, it changes things. If I've heard the final score of the game, I'm not likely to stop and watch it as I'm scrolling through the channels. You don't want to know how the movie ends, before it starts. If you know how it ends – it changes things.

Of course, the same could be said about many things. How will this war end? How will the job interview go? How will the surgery turn out? Knowing the end changes how you live now – and how you face the days ahead.

And so it is with the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. For us who have walked with Christ through His Passion every Holy Week – it's easy, hindsight is 20/20 – we know how it ends. But for the disciples and the women who walked with Jesus through His suffering, crucifixion, and death – it was anything but easy.

When the women come to the tomb that Easter morning – the angel's message from the Lord is straightforward – “[Jesus] is not here, for He has risen, as He said.”

“As He said.” Jesus had told His followers ahead of time how all this would end – that all these things would happen. At least three times He told His disciples, in no uncertain terms, that – “The Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day.”

In other words, they should have known how this would end – and it should have changed things – but it didn't. Why is that? Because in the midst of the turmoil and chaos of this life – what God has said to us, what He promises – is often forced into the background.

The disciples come face to face with a mob carrying swords and clubs – that is foremost – and so they scattered. Peter was put on the spot – forced to make a public confession – but rather than risk his life by being associated with Jesus – he took the easy way out and denied Him (three times). The women who watched Jesus suffer and die – came to the tomb expecting to take care of a corpse.

But early in the morning – not with the Easter excitement we have – but more like a Monday morning, tired from the past few days, with sleep in their eyes – they come to the tomb.

Out of nowhere comes an earthquake – and an angel of the Lord who appeared like lightning, with clothes as white as snow – descending from heaven, rolling back the stone from the tomb, and sitting on it. Even the soldiers guarding the tomb trembled in fear, and fell down as dead men.

But for the women – a Word from God – “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come and see the place where He lay.”

Seeing with their own eyes that the body was not where they had seen Him laid – hearing the angel say that He had been raised to life – departing from the tomb with fear and great joy, and running into Jesus, even touching Him and worshipping Him – they ran to tell the disciples ..... what they should have already known.

Just “as He said.” Has not our Lord told us that there would be wickedness and suffering in these Last Days – that we must pass through much toil and tribulation to enter into His kingdom? Didn’t He say that the disciple is not above His Master – so if our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, has suffered – shouldn’t we expect it as well?

You know how this ends. Jesus has told you that the heavens and the earth are passing away – and that there would be a new heaven and a new earth. This very day God said to you – “Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

You know, and believe, and confess that the ascended Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. You have heard, and believe His promise – that He has gone to prepare a place for you – and that He will come again to take you to be with Him, that where He is, you may be also.

“A time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out.” Christ forgives all your sins – and where there is the forgiveness of sins – there is also the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting .... just “as He said.”

Daily you are faced with the unexpected, with fears, isolation, anxiety – the chaos of this fallen world – and the words and promises of God are forced into the background, drowned out by the noise in your life.

So, our Lord Jesus Christ comes to us – again and again – patiently revealing Himself to us, to set aside our fears, and deliver what He has always promised.

Dearly beloved, you know how it will end – you know the promises of Jesus who died, and was raised to life again. Even though you die, yet shall you live. And even though your body is placed into its tomb – Christ Himself will come and resurrect your body – so that you may live with Him in the glory of heaven forever ... just “as He said.”

That changes how you live out your days – living not in fear, but in faith. Living with the Easter joy of the resurrected Christ who is with you, and comes to provide for all your needs. A life that hungers and thirst for the resurrected Body and Blood – releasing you from the guilt and bondage of sin – giving you a life that has no end.

God bless you with that life of faith – a life lived in communion with your Lord Jesus Christ – and with your brothers and sisters in Christ – now, and for all eternity. Amen.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!