

Happy Easter!



St. Augustine
Easter Morning
Sunrise

But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

Very early on Easter morning Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome brought spices to Jesus' tomb so that they might anoint His body. Can you imagine the surprise, the shock, the fear they must have felt in finding Jesus missing from His tomb and in His place a heavenly messenger with the stunning news that Jesus had risen from the dead?! They were the first to receive this news, and yet they were so afraid that the Bible tells us they fled from the tomb and said nothing to anyone. I am sure they were trying to piece together in their minds what they had just seen—and not seen.

Later, a distraught Mary Magdalene is back searching for Jesus when He appears to her. How touching that the first person He chooses to appear to is the one whom He had cast seven demons out of. I think Mary Magdalene was clinging to her faith in Jesus despite the circumstances. She had been set free from such bondage; she above all others had to realize that no earthly power could have performed the miraculous healing that she received.

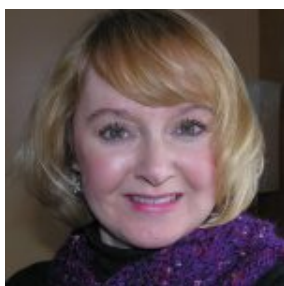
Now the word starts to spread that Jesus is alive, but Jesus'

disciples don't believe it until they see Him for themselves. Soon they begin to realize that the plan is much bigger than they ever imagined—a heavenly kingdom, not an earthly reign. And they will be the ones to start spreading the good news.

I love the joy and power of Easter morning. Because of Easter morning we have hope. Hope that we can change. That we can be set free. That we can forgive. That we can love. That we can be forgiven and healed and restored to the relationship with God we were meant to have.

This Easter morning found me on the beach in St. Augustine basking in a beautiful sunrise while the chorus of “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” wafted down the beach to me from an outdoor service a mile away. It's easy in this setting to sense the magic of Easter. But what's important is that this message is for every person in every place, from a beach in Florida to a slum in Calcutta to a prison in China to wherever you are, as you are. Don't wait until you “get your act together” to come to Jesus, because none of us ever can without His help. That's what He came for and that's why He died and that's why He rose again.

Happy Easter and pray on!



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