



**Easter 2025**  
**"Fear Dismantling, Resurrection Believing, Joy Receiving"**  
**By Pastor Jody May**

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**[CALL TO HEAR]**

**Matthew 28:1-10 ESV**

**The Resurrection**

**28** Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>And for **fear** of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, "Do not be **afraid**, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." <sup>8</sup>So they departed quickly from the tomb with **fear** and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be **afraid**; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

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**[PRAY]**

**Introduction**

**Fear, it is one of those things that connects all of mankind together.** You know you can't say that about too many things. Like we all can agree that we need food and water to live, that is a universal need we all have in common. Yes, we can agree that our DNA is the same making us human beings, giving us distinction from the animal kingdom. That also means we all have the same origin story; we have moms and dads, contrary to what culture and the world says is possible through self-identification efforts. As well, if you live in the US, we all have two certain things that will happen to all of us, death and



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taxes! Outside of those biological markers and citizen status I want to also state that **FEAR** is something I know for sure **we all have in common.**<sup>1</sup>

We all have fears, when it comes to standing up in front of crowds and talking (**fear public speaking**).

We all have fears whether we will be liked by those we crave attention from (**fear of rejection**).

We all have fears when it comes to leadership of self and others (**fear of making wrong decisions**).

We all have fears that we will make wrong decisions about finances, life, and love (**fear of failure/fear of success**).

We all have fears about giving our words to others/accepting responsibility (**fear of commitment**).

In this rendering of the Easter Account, I just read to you today, Matthew is pointing out this same thing we all have in common, FEAR.

There was fear by the guards when they saw the resurrection. V.4

There was fear from the ladies that went to visit the tomb, seeing Jesus was gone. V.5

There was a **reverent fear** by the ladies when they knew it was an angel they were talking to. V.8

Lastly, fear was confronted and dismantled for God's people by Jesus in v.10

So, what we are witnessing is the first preaching of the Gospel, post resurrection account. It shows us **what the gospel attacks first when God's people are graced with faith and compelled to believe in the good news of the Resurrection. It's the emotional response that we all have from our fallen or sinful state – FEAR.** It was confronted in the story we just read, and I want to show us why and how **Fear must give away to the empty tomb** giving you freedom to pursue God as you were meant to do.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/smashing-the-brainblocks/201901/12-common-fears-that-keep-us-stuck>



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You see whatever it is you are afraid of in here today I want to make sure you leave with this magnificent truth!

**MP:**

**FAITH in the Resurrected Jesus is what conquers our FEARS!**

**Here's why we need to deal with Fear as God's people.** Fear is like the fentanyl that gets laced into all our emotional dilemmas/trauma, and because of that it keeps us from having victory in our lives over our irrationalities our anxieties, and avoidance behaviors. As God's people what we have been learning over the past 33 weeks is how to apply the SoM throughout our lives, and the number 1 destroyer of that pursuit is fear. Fear is what tells you don't try, fear is what tells you failure awaits, and if I may be honest with you, fear takes the joy out of living for Christ. Fear negates the effect of living out the only command in the SoM 7:12; *do unto others as you would have them to do to you*, **because fear asks, what's the point?** People can't change and you can't change, because the world says believe only in what you have known not in what God promises will happen through faith and obedience. No family, fear must be dealt with if we are going to embrace this Kingdom Life we have been talking about for the past 9 months, and FAITH in the resurrected Jesus is the only answer I know that can do that.

**Fear debilitates us in 2 ways:**

- **First, it keeps us from confessing our sins to God and others** - we fear judgment/rejection.
- **Second, it prevents us from living as a representative of Jesus and His Kingdom** - we fear commitment/failure/loss of freedoms.

Let's talk about the **1<sup>st</sup> affect that fear has on us as in our ability to deal with sin**, which has been with us from the beginning:

**Genesis 3:9-10 ESV**

<sup>9</sup>But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup>And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was **afraid**, because I was naked, and I hid myself."



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**Fear is the great wall that keeps us from going to God when we need Him the most.** We all sin like Adam, and instead of going to God for Mercy we run, we hide and we cover our shame with man-made attempts at redemption. Prior to Jesus' resurrection, during the OT, multiple times God tells His people, **"FEAR NOT"; turn to me, confess your sin, I will restore you, I will make a way for you, but we never listen. It took the message of the cross and resurrection together to get our attention to tell us there is something bigger than this world we should fear and that is God.**

As noted earlier, Fear not only blocks our ability to confess sin, but **it prevents us living like Christ as His rep for His Kingdom;** walking into life situations that may be hard, difficult, and sometimes dangerous even though it may be the path God is calling us to. Fear can keep us from living the life that is actually best for us! But remember family, we were taught the path is a Narrow way, and all God's children must go through persecution to enter it.

**The Greek word for fear, found in Mat. 28: 5 & 10,** is **"Phobos"** from which we get our psychiatric word describing irrational fears, "Phobia". Scientists say that this particular type of fear stems from the same area of the brain, the **Obtula Amygdala** behind the pituitary gland, whereby we make the decision for **"Fight"** or **"Flight"**. I am going to add a third decision in response to fear to add to this scientific observation, **"Freeze"**. I have encountered even amongst the members of my own family the bewilderment that Phobias can bring and let me tell you I have yet to see a whole lot of "Fight" but I have seen a whole lot of "Flee" or "Freeze". **(Illustrations of paralyzing fear in my family; arachnophobia, acrophobia, claustrophobia)**

**Fear can be paralyzing, which is life threatening when it prevents you from (1) confessing sin and (2) going where God wants you to go.** Most of the time our fear is unfounded, meaning it's not that you have necessarily encountered that which you are afraid of, it's just the thought of that something may happen to you one day and you can't stand it!



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- Most of us in this room have a fear of cancer yet most of us have never dealt with it.
- Most of us have a fear of retirement, yet I can count on one hand the people retired in this room.
- Most of us have a fear of sharks but no one here is or probably will never live near the ocean.
- Most of us have a fear of falling to our deaths but statistically that probably won't happen to anyone in here.
- All of us are afraid of dying and yet well no one in here has gone through that.

**The bottom line is everyone suffers from irrational fear every day. It is this same fear that freezes us from confessing our sin to one another and living for God the way we were intended to.**

Paul in his encouragement of his young protégé Timothy when he was to lead the church and fend off the wolves in Ephesus was offered this encouragement which is the same encouragement for all of God's people.

**2 Timothy 1:7 ESV**

<sup>7</sup>for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

We are not to be a people that jump and attack someone or something every time we get scared. We don't run away from confrontation when it comes calling and we don't freeze and waste an opportunity to reveal God's glory.

**No, God's people are to be like Christ when He faced the Cross.** He had the power of the Spirit of God upon Him, by which He controlled His life up to the end, not saying one more word to Pilate or the Sanhedrin than He should of. He endured the shame, humiliation, torture and did not give in until it was time to give up His life. All of that driven by His love for His God and then His love for us. **Church, are you in agreement that Jesus modeled this well for you!?**

**This morning, I want to declare the Gospel about the glory of the Resurrection and its' power to obliterate FEAR!** We all feel it from time to



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time, but fear is never to be taken as something that you live by, it is a feeling, **we don't live by feelings we live by Faith**, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

**MP:**

**FAITH in the Resurrected Jesus is what conquers your FEARS!**

**How does Fear begin to give way, how does it begin to be conquered and put into submission? It all comes by way of the empty tomb.**

**1. Fear gives way to **BELIEF** because of the empty tomb.**

<sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>And for **fear** of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, "Do not be **afraid**, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. **Come, see the place where he lay.**

First off there was two sets of people here that day:

- There were the guards, who here in our story represents those folks afraid because **changed just happened**.
- Then there are the women who are afraid of the **change to come**, afraid to loose what Jesus had brought them.

**Change is one of the biggest catalysts of conquering fear in people's lives.**

The empty tomb tells all people that change is the only constant thing in the world because God is always in the process of redeeming His creation, He is always making a way, He is always looking for the lost, there is never a dead end for God, He is always making things new! **The angel says come look, it has all CHANGED!** Jesus' resurrection, the empty tomb tells us that everytime something happens in our lives, **when we experience change**, it does not mean our doom, but it means God is active in your life causing you to reach out to Him, to pray to Him. **Prayer is putting your faith in Jesus** because you are



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believing He is raised from the dead AND that He can hear you NOW! **Fear diminishes the more you pray because the action of prayer declares you believe more in the resurrected Jesus you can't see than in the problems you can see.**

**Only a living God can answer your prayers**, only a living omniscient God knows the pitfalls you may encounter, only a living omnipresent God can be present when you face fears, only a living omnipotent God can deliver you through the valley of death in this life or deliver you to the next by preserving your faith to the end. **The empty tomb by the belief in it, declares it is time for change and it is time for your fear to give way to it!**

**Family 'IF' we embrace the empty tomb and all the ramifications it holds then FEAR must FLEE! There is no place for debilitating fear in your life.**

## **2. Fear gives way to JOY because of the empty tomb.**

<sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and **behold**, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. **See**, I have told you."<sup>8</sup> So they departed quickly from the tomb with **fear and great joy**, and ran to tell his disciples.

You're seeing here in the text what it looks like when fear gives way to belief. Their course of action was not, "let's go see if he was right" it was the reaction of people filled with conviction. **They left the angel with with fear and joy.** This is actually an example of the good fear of God we all need to have, it refers to the feeling of respect and humility directed toward a divine being. **Jesus had earned their respect through the cross and was rewarded with RESPECT by His followers!** Family, this is a healthy fear, do you have it? Are you fearfully joyful over the resurrected Jesus you have encountered in your life? Does the knowledge of His triumph send you out in to the world like there is something you must share now!

**I have a couple of observations about this:**





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**First thing is to understand that the path to joy comes first through the fear of disbelief.** These ladies could not believe what had happened to their Lord, what the crucifixion had ended. The death of their Lord meant that the new freedoms that they had gained with Jesus, in His presence may now be gone. **In those days you have to understand women had no rights, they were viewed as property.** But Jesus viewed them with the worth that God had created them, **their value came not from what they could offer Him but it was placed on them from the one that had everything to offer!**

It was through the path of fearing the unknown, not freezing, but giving into the pursuit of closure and facing that grave, did they receive the best news of their lives. Maybe you have a situation in your life you refuse to look at, **could it be that the reason you are lacking joy in your life is you just don't want to face truth,** you're avoiding a confrontation, you don't really want closure on something? The way to get over fear is by looking what you are afraid of and telling yourself **your Jesus is bigger than that!**

**Secondly, their fear and joy was not because they had seen Him yet, but it was delivered to them out of faith!** The belief in the empty tomb, facing their greatest fears, brought them joy. **Joy is the realization that something had changed.** **They were fearful not about the possibility of not finding Jesus, but because they were excited about what type of Jesus they would find.** They had been rewarded with joy from the empty tomb for it put them in the proper view of a Jesus that death could not hold.

Possibly this morning you're frozen because there is some bad news you don't want to hear. There could be some decisions that you know you need to make, some things that need to be let go of, **but you are afraid to move because of a "what if" consequence.** But your path, like these ladies, is no different if you want to experience full joy that only comes from knowing that Jesus is near to you and real **and that means you have to go through the challenges that seem unpleasant for you.** The empty tomb is the promise to you and I that there is a very real and living Jesus waiting for you on the road of life. Are you excited to find him, is there a sense of fear and joy in your heart at what He can do, has he





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cultivated the proper fear of God in your heart this morning? Then rejoice, for that joy in your heart means that fear has begun to give way in your life.

**3. Fear gives way to OBEDIENCE because of the empty tomb.**

<sup>9</sup>And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, **"Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers"** to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

The author, Matthew, is careful to spell out something for us here. This is no Ghost, this is no hallucination, Jesus spoke first, He recognized them first, and they fell down and grabbed His Physical feet, they were rewarded with more joy, more respect, because of their faith. **Their fear gave way first from belief in the empty tomb, then their fear shrank way more as joy was increasing from their apprehension over Him, and here it got obliterated because they were rewarded with the Lord's presence.**

Fear is indeed conquered! God had found His people not hiding in shame as in the Garden in Genesis 3, but He had flipped the tables and now sinners came running to Him because He had already paid their price for sin. And they are rewarded not with earthly blessings but rewarded with the ability to do what they were created to do – Worship/Obey/Follow their God! **Your best moment in your life is when you can finally fall at Jesus feet AFTER you have walked through your fear and discovered that you want nothing else but Him, that's Salvation!**

**That's what God wants for all of us! He punished His Son for our sins so that we can be done with our fear!** God slaughtered a lamb on Calvary as He slaughtered an animal in the garden to provide a way to cover our shame and live without fear!

**So, what we see now is the result of worship and joy is always the same thing, OBEDIENCE!** As the ladies were at His feet Jesus never stops with directions, "go and tell my brothers".



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There is nothing like sharing the joy you have when you are excited about something, it only grows. It is the way we make disciples and it is the way that God fuels our lives for continual resistance against fear. **The more you share the less afraid you become.**

**[CALL TO OBEDIENCE]**

This morning my people my prayer is that we start becoming a people that are done with the debilitating force of fear in our lives:

- May fear give way in your life by belief in the empty tomb for, "He is Risen".

Family if you are ever to live in the power of the resurrection then you will have to face the fear of rejection. Take a chance, confess your sins to one another, ask for help when you need it, and let the love of Christ through His people work in your lives.

- May fear give way in your life by Joy over the empty tomb, may you discover He is waiting for you in all your paths of life.

Family what is it today that you are not confronting? Is there a conversation you have to have with a loved one, is there a relationship you have to walk away from, is there a way of life you have to leave. Every closed door produces a change you must go through, that will cause you to pray and put your trust fully in the resurrected Jesus. He's good for it, there is nothing He won't walk with you through.

- May fear give way this morning by obedience so that your joy may increase in sharing His good news with others.

The most sure-fire way of having joy in the resurrection is worship Jesus and show that reverent healthy fear through obedience to share with others His glory. Tell your family how Jesus is great, tell your



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friends you have hope now, tell the world to come and see the empty tomb because everything now has changed!

**I pray that you have learned and will experience this truth this Easter:**

**FAITH in the Resurrected Jesus is the only way you can ever truly conquer your FEARS!**

**PRAYER**

**COMMUNION**

**Matthew 26:26-29**

<sup>26</sup> Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." <sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus. Jesus lived a life of facing fears and conquering them through the Spirit. When He faced rejection, He always told the truth, when He faced persecution, He walked right into the fire, when He faced humiliation, He bore it on Calvary for all to see. This is the life we could not live, take joy in your Savior today family, and fear this world no longer. Praise be to Him for His glorious life!

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. This week we remember the tragedy and beauty of the cross. By His wounds we are healed, by His blood we are brought back to life, by His sacrifice we are set free, by His propitiation we are spared wrath. Once and for all and for all of time, His mediation shall eternally persevere in us. Praise Him for His glorious love!



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**[CONFESSION OF FAITH]**

\* The Congregation will stand

**Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"**

**Congregation – Philippians 2:5-11 ESV**

<sup>5</sup>Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**[OFFERING+LAST SONG]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that has vindicated His Son through Resurrection from the dead, stating that yes indeed justice has been paid in full.

Go in the name of the Son, that lived a life in submission to the Father, who offered Himself as an atonement for sin, and who was raised from the grave crippling the effect of our fears in this life.

Go in the name of and power of the HS, that open our eyes to the value of the empty tomb, He is Risen, fear and death is defeated, now go in JOY and share this good news with others.