

# ***While it was still dark***

## ***Easter Sunday (A)***

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# **Sunday, April 9, 2023**

Please close your eyes momentarily and imagine what it was like. The women set out in the dark - They would finish their duty. To finish preparing Jesus's body, laid to rest so hastily the night before last. They knew what they were to expect - perhaps the men on guard could help them move the stone, and then they could lovingly carry out the last of these duties on Jesus' lifeless body - And then what? Well, grieving meant making plans was so difficult. It had gone horribly wrong - Last week, they had entered in triumph with big dreams; now, it was best to hide away and not draw too much attention to themselves, and their hearts were heavy.

But that is not what happened!

There was an earthquake, an angel, a message, and no Jesus, and then he appeared. Suddenly what they knew, what they anticipated, what they expected, was gone. And so was the grief that overwhelmed them.

Often we are like these women. In the uncertainty of the darkness, we make plans and decide what we will do for Jesus and what we will do. We have it all worked out, but as suddenly as the dawn, God steps in and changes everything.

This is the message of Easter. God has stepped in and changed everything.

This is more than just the Easter story - it is the faith story. It is what happens when we encounter God. Everything changes. Often, we set out in the darkness and might know what we expect, but then God is there, and the reality of his world, his light, changes our perspective. We all must take that journey to the tomb and meet with the risen Lord - so that we might have everything in perspective. Faith is the result.

But we might have yet to set out to do that. In the darkness, we begin a journey - we may come to church because it is the right thing to do, or because it is the family's expectation, or we may find a Christian friend they have the answers even if we do not have the questions.

God is a God who is searching for those who can believe, and on this day, we celebrate the resurrection; this message of hope is the one we should embrace.

It comes down to this - whether the resurrection is true or not. And if it is? What does it mean in our life? Frank Morrison faced this dilemma, and his search ended in the book *Who Moved the Stone?* Studying the biblical narrative, he concluded that the answer was God, and from this point to faith and into the light.

It is easy for us to ignore this and continue in the darkness, but if we are serious - we must come to the point where we either believe or not. This Easter, we face this question "Do we believe in the resurrection?"

My prayer is that your answer is a resounding YES.

**AMEN**