

Easter - April 5, 2026, 9:00am service

Matthew 28:1-10

“Go and Tell”

1. Earthquakes are expected and happen regularly in some parts of the world.
  - a. Places like Tokyo, Los Angeles or Mexico City.
  - b. These cities make regular preparations for these quakes.
  - c. They have construction standards so buildings can withstand a quake up to a certain magnitude.
  - d. The cities also have a kind of culture which accounts for the frequent quakes.
  - e. That was in evidence several years ago when a bad earthquake took place in Mexico City, in 2017
    - i. Strangely that 7.1 magnitude quake came just two hours after the city had held its annual earthquake preparedness drill.
    - ii. You can imagine the kind of emotional whiplash! But the people sprung into action
    - iii. Everyday citizens immediately started helping one another, especially going to any structures that had collapsed or been badly damaged.
    - iv. First responders together with regular folks courageously found themselves digging through rubble to bring people to safety
    - v. In that process a very specific signal is shared in the midst of the chaos of rescue.
    - vi. The people at the site are always listening for the voices of those who may be trapped by rubble, and in particularly tense moments when they need complete silence to hear, they use a hand signal that lets everyone at the site know that they need complete silence and they need all machinery is to stop: they raise their arm with a clenched fist.
    - vii. Watch video or pictures from that day, and it sends a chill down your spine
    - viii. The crowd of professional and volunteer rescuers follows suit, and suddenly dozens and dozens of people are all standing in absolute silence with their fists raised, and an eerie quiet falls over a city block.
    - ix. They are listening. Waiting for signs of life to continue their rescue.
2. There are two earthquakes in the Crucifixion and Easter stories as told in Matthew
  - a. One earthquake happened when Jesus died, as we read last week.
  - b. And today we read there was another earthquake when an angel descended from heaven, and opened up the tomb where Jesus had been buried.

- c. Whether one considers these earthquakes as literal or as theological symbolism, both of those moment really shook things up
  - d. The quake at the empty tomb seemed to have been followed by a moment of eerie silence
    - i. the burly Roman soldiers guarding the tomb had fainted,
    - ii. but two of the disciples, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, stood firm even in shock at the sight
    - iii. that silence, like the silence of earthquake rescuers, leaves us wondering if they listened for signs of life in the rubble, in the tomb
    - iv. And the angel breaks the silence with the news: “He is not here, for he has been raised!”
  - e. That was the news from the angel, and the news we try to wrap our heads around yet today:
    - i. where they expected death, there was life;
    - ii. where they expected despair there was now hope
  - f. The two Mary’s, far more courageous than Roman soldiers, silently approached and saw the empty tomb, and then they were off to tell the other disciples!
  - g. Professor Mike Skinner writes “The brevity of the [Matthew resurrection] narrative might underscore the lingering danger. Those guards are going to wake up, after all. And Rome never runs out of crosses. The story’s sense of haste could instead (or also) emphasize the importance of getting to the next steps as soon as possible. The Messiah’s determination to spread mercy must not slow down.”
  - h. And so the two Mary’s ran to share the unbelievable news when, like an aftershock, they were stopped on their tracks this time by the very risen Jesus they looked for, who greeted them and they fell at his feet in amazement and reverence
    - i. They get the same marching orders “Go and tell” So they resumed their race back to the rest of the disciples, to share the news: Life won over death.
3. There are moments in our lives which shake us up, moments of seismic significance that rock us to our core.
- a. These are difficult things: a layoff, a health crisis, a family conflict, a death.
  - b. We feel like the stability we took for granted is gone, and we’re left unbalanced and looking for something to hang on to.
  - c. Sometimes a moment of stillness breaks through the chaos, and we feel in our hearts the voice of God telling us, as the angel told the Mary’s: Don’t be afraid.

- d. Or Lee's wisdom as told to her daughter Mary resonates: All is well.
  - e. It isn't like the distress disappears or the crisis evaporates
  - f. But just like with the Mary's in the gospel, just like with the Mexico City earthquake rescuers, that silent pause gives us hope and the needed assurance that there is life in the midst of death, there is resurrection and renewal even when the whole world comes crashing down on us
  - g. That Easter morning Jesus lifted the rubble that traps us: the sin that suffocates us, the injustice and evil that oppress us, the guilt and shame that try to control us.
4. As with the two Mary's, our role is to go and tell others the good news, not saying that there will be no more death or pain, but rather that God offers us tangible hope in the face of all obstacles, and together we channel the love and courage of Jesus, and with hope we stand at the ready to lift one another out of the circumstances which try to bury us, and remind one another that there is life in community through the Spirit's work, a Spirit that refuses to be snuffed out.

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/resurrection-of-our-lord/commentary-on-matthew-281-10-14>

<https://www.univision.com/univision-news/in-photos-silent-fist-the-gesture-that-unites-mexican-rescue-workers-in-the-earthquake-aftermath-fotos>