

MONDAY 18 April 2022 "Easter Monday" Luke 24:33-48

Good Monday after Easter to you my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

When's the last time you woke up one morning feeling like you were in a daze after participating in a very big event, maybe even a life changing event, the day before? Today is Monday following Easter. What do you suppose that Monday after Jesus' resurrection was like for Mary Magdalene, or Mary the mother of Jesus, or John or Peter and other disciples? Or how about Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea? Or what about Pilate and the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas who had sentenced Jesus to death rather than recognizing Him as their Jewish Messiah?

I'm sure ALL of them were replaying the events of Easter/Passover weekend in their minds. Those like Pilate, and the Sanhedrin, who were leaders and had authority to make life or death decisions, were probably wrestling on this Monday, with one fundamental question: **Did I make the right decision? Did I do the right thing?** Those who saw Jesus ALIVE on Easter Sunday were probably wrestling with a different question: **How is it possible Jesus is alive? I know He is, I've seen Him, but what does it mean...about Him, and for me and my future?**

But let's be honest my friends, that was Passover weekend and there were many thousands of people in and around Jerusalem. *Only a small percentage of those people knew anything about either the death or resurrection of Jesus.* Jerusalem was a very busy place that Monday, with most people going on with their lives totally oblivious to what was happening with Jesus. *And then, of course, on that Monday morning, there were millions of people scattered all across the Roman Empire, and in the rest of the known world at that time, who had never heard the name "Jesus" or knew anything at all about the events of this historic weekend!* Sounds very much like today, the Monday after Easter 2022, would you agree?

So, I have a question for all of us this Monday... *"What difference does Easter make in YOUR life, your family, your city, your nation and our world, TODAY?"* We have no record in the Bible of anything significant that occurred on that Monday after Passover/Easter. The next recorded event is one week after Easter Sunday, when the disciples were together once again, and this time Thomas is with them, and Jesus appears to them all. (John 20:26-29) That event convinced Thomas that Jesus was alive, but for the entire week after Easter, Thomas held a strong and legitimate position which he expressed at least once and maybe several times: ***"Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it."*** (John 20:25) Thomas had NOT seen the resurrected Jesus on Easter Sunday. Many others had, but for whatever reason Thomas had not been with any of them when they had their encounters with the resurrected Jesus. So, Thomas was like you and me and most everyone else... ***can I believe it is true? If it is true, how does that affect me and my life?*** I wonder how you are answering that question on this Monday after Easter, 2022?

I think it's safe for us to assume the friends of Jesus, both the disciples and the women, and perhaps especially his mother Mary, were very careful on this Monday, and perhaps all this week, to keep a very low profile, out of public sight as much as possible. Why? *Because the religious leaders who had been determined to eliminate Jesus were in a panic!* These friends of Jesus might now be the 'most wanted' people, suspected, by these leaders, of having fabricated a scam...or knowing the truth! The guards, the leaders had assigned to keep a close watch on the tomb, had reported an angel had come and rolled away the stone which blocked the entrance to the tomb and women friends of Jesus had come to the tomb early that Sunday morning to care for the body... *but when the tomb opened, Jesus' body was gone!* Those guards had no explanation. No one had come near that tomb since they had sealed it and taken their guard positions. **The guards knew the truth, an unexplainable resurrection had taken place.**

The religious leaders, who had been so opposed to Jesus for so long, and then on Thursday evening had condemned Him to death after mocking and beating Him, were afraid that the guards' report might be true. Considering all the miracles Jesus had performed, including raising Lazarus from the dead, and His own promise that He would rise from the dead on the third day, the religious leaders had asked Pilate for a guard at the tomb, remember? (Matt. 27:62-66) Can you understand their panic on that Monday? *If Jesus was resurrected, there would be no controlling or stopping Jesus or His purposes now!* Would He be coming searching for them? What might He do to them considering the brutality and humiliation they had poured out on Him? They would certainly be helpless in the face of His resurrection power! Perhaps 'panic' does not adequately describe the fear these pompous, prideful, arrogant religious leaders were feeling that Monday!

Exactly where Jesus' closest friends spent that Monday, we don't know, I've often wondered if they went back to Bethany, to the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. I expect they spent the day simply rehearsing over and over what they each had experienced on Easter Sunday... the women first going to the tomb before daybreak; Mary Magdalene's personal encounter with risen Jesus in the garden near the tomb; the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus when Jesus showed up and walked with them; but most of all their shared experience with Jesus that Easter Sunday evening when they were together. Luke records it this way: ***"...the Eleven and those with them were assembled together...and Jesus Himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at My hands and My feet. It is I Myself! Touch Me and see, a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have' ... And then He opened up their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things..."*** (Luke 24:33-48)

So my friends, on this Monday after Easter, may I urge us all to be careful NOT to get so busy with normal life that Easter fades quickly into the background and has little to no effect on us? To prevent that from happening, I urge you to spend time doing today what the close friends of Jesus did... relive the story of Easter Sunday as you find them in the Gospels: Matthew 28; Luke 24 or John 20 and spend some time talking with the risen Jesus. Ask Jesus to speak to you in a fresh way today about how His Easter resurrection should affect your life and mine TODAY the Monday after Easter!

Here's a song to help you with that reflection... How would your life be different if you had been there?

Today's Scripture is Luke 24:33-48.