

“Fear and Joy”
Matthew 28:1-10

Can you describe something in your life that has caused fear and joy at the same? If you have experienced this, it happened around some sort of change.

The resurrection has changed everything, and the change it brings creates fear and joy in us.

The women before the arrival see life as getting worse; they feel like fools; they are sad, hopeless, still under the yoke of the cruel and powerful, the innocent and weak continue to suffer, and the dead are still dead. We don't truly know the depths of their despair as they approach the monument of their despair.

When they arrive at the tomb, they enter a different world.

The first sign that they had crossed into a new world was the result of the earth trembling beneath their feet.

They saw the angel, the stone rolled away, the guards shaking on the ground paralyzed by fear.

Then with the angel's prompting, they look inside the tomb, and Jesus is not there.

Then after they receive the angel's command to go and tell the disciples that Jesus has risen from the dead, Matthew tells us that they left in “fear and great joy.”

It seems plausible for them to be in fear and joy simultaneously, but why?

Is it possible that they left in fear because they were thinking, “*What if the angel's message is really true?*”

That means that everything will change for me. What if I don't want to change? Some people are so comfortable with their life, that change is terrifying, even if their life stinks. The fear of change is greater than the misery they are in.

The predominate emotion on that first Easter was not joy, but fear. Earlier, Christ's followers had said, “He is dead. Now what's to become of us?” And after His resurrection, it was “He is back! Now what is to become of us?”

So, they leave in fear...and joy. “Could all these things Jesus talked about and showed us...be true?”

Do you see the tension in their lives? Fear and Joy. Fear of what might be and can be, and the joy of what might be and can be. This tension may seem daunting, but we are to remember Christ's words, *Remember, that I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

We can live with this tension because Christ is with us!

Finally, the angel sent the women on a mission. They were not to linger but go and deliver the message that Jesus is alive, and His resurrection is changing everything.

The world as you knew it on Good Friday that was filled with fear, self-righteousness, indifference and sentimentality is being challenged once again by God and His risen Christ. Truth and love, goodness and mercy, grace and forgiveness, have and will win. It will win first *in you*. Christ has promised that the power that raised Him from the dead, will raise your dead spirits to new life. He will live in you. He will conquer your fears and increase your joy. You

will have nothing to fear with the change He is bringing to you and doing in you, *because He is with you; He is in you!*

As you live before the face of God today, you must answer some important questions.

- Do you desire to be reconciled to God?
- Do you desire the positive change that God wants to do in you?
- Do you want love, joy, peace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, grace to be your constant companions?
- Do you want to experience resurrection power in your life?
- Do you desire to have your sins forgiven and live eternally with Christ?
- Do you desire to be like Jesus?

Or would you rather stay as you are, because you are afraid of how the resurrection will change You. How it will turn your world upside down.