



Sermon from
April 5 2026
The Resurrection of Our Lord / Easter Sunday
Pastor Amy Vigesaa

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the original Mary Poppins, the Banks family lives next door to a former naval officer named Admiral Boom, who fires cannons from his rooftop “ship”. At precisely 8am and 6pm, the cannon is fired causing a bit of an earthquake. In multiple scenes, the Banks family is seen preparing for it. They have it down though- knowing which plate will drop and what furniture will slide across the floor. And they are in their proper places in anticipation, holding their world together. Their lives are in order, even when the earthquake comes. No surprises for the Banks family- nothing will rattle them or shake them out of their neat and tidy life. That is until the arrival of Mary Poppins.

It is the third day, early in the morning, and the earth begins to shake. It was not the earthquake that moved the stone out of place though, it was the angel sitting on top of it. I imagine there was a smile on this messenger’s face, but we might not have been able to see it since scripture says the angel was as bright as lightning and white as snow which honestly has its own glare to it. The soldiers

stationed at the tomb to make sure nothing got in or out, shook in terror and passed out. I imagine they got that reaction quite a bit- people fainting at the sight of them, this angel. So perhaps rather quickly, the angel told the women to not be afraid. The women did not faint. Instead, they approached the tomb and the angel spoke to them. They were invited to look inside the now-empty tomb, to see that it was indeed empty. Then they were given a message to go and tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. It says they left in fear and with great joy. It seems like a strange combination- fear and joy, but we know two things can be true at the same time and I imagine the moment called for both. It would be normal to be a bit shaken up, and yet excited about the news. As they were running, Jesus showed up. This was a joyful greeting that I'm sure must've surprised the women. I found myself stuck on this part of the story. Why would Jesus appear? Wasn't the angel enough? The message was already delivered, but Jesus showed up anyway.

In the reading from Acts, the Apostle Peter tells us why. He said that God allowed Jesus to appear, not to everyone, but to those chosen to be witnesses. These women were now witnesses to the resurrected Jesus. They saw him firsthand, with their own eyes. They were not merely delivering a message to the eleven disciples, they were chosen to be more. They were chosen to be eyewitnesses. Depending on what a person witnesses, it can be life changing. And this, of course, was that sort of moment. Often, we think of eyewitnesses being people who saw something awful- a crime or an accident. But these women were eyewitnesses of something completely different. They were witnesses of good news of great joy. And whether people

believed them or not, they knew what they saw. Jesus gave them something to hold onto, a specific encounter with him.

I also wonder though, if Jesus showed up because *he* was excited! We often think about what Easter means for us- it is great joy for us: new life, hope, forgiveness, such joy. But it must've been joyful for Jesus as well- that he could show up after dying in front of his friends; that he could greet them on the road and see their smiles and hear the excitement in their voices. He must've found great joy in that- in relieving the grief of those he loved. He must've been overjoyed that all people could receive forgiveness and be at one with God, because of what he did on the cross. If God truly *allowed* Jesus to appear as Peter suggests in our reading, I can imagine Jesus looking at God the Creator, like a kid pleading with his mom to go see his friends. And God gave a smile and waved a hand at Jesus, giving permission to run off and see them. What joy!

So, Jesus appears to the women. First, they saw the angel of the Lord, then they got to look inside the empty tomb, and now they held onto the feet of the resurrected Jesus, bowing before him in worship. That's a lot for a Sunday morning before having your coffee. That's enough to shake a person's world; enough to rattle their senses and get their heart pumping. That's enough to make a person's knees go out from under them. It's certainly enough to change things. But I wonder, for those of us who anticipate Easter like clockwork, as a day on the calendar that comes around every year; who have been through this

before; who know there are 5 weeks in Lent, then Holy Week with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday; if we aren't ready to put everything back in place once the moment is over. Like the Family Banks, have we organized life in a way that holds back the surprise; that keeps us from feeling any lingering effects of this life-shaking moment? We get a little jolt of excitement as we come together and celebrate today, but do we let the story shake us to our core? Do we allow ourselves to experience the awe and joy of it all? Do we run to tell others only to find ourselves kneeling in front of Jesus? Or like the soldiers, do we find ourselves lying flat on the ground, lifeless, missing the moment.

The Easter story is not a fairytale from the past. It is not a myth from ancient times. The resurrection of Jesus is a moment recorded by eyewitnesses, women and men who saw firsthand, who held onto the real live Son of God, and then told others who told others, who told others. And by some miracle of God, it's a story still being told because it shook people out of their neat and tidy lives. It rattled their senses and got their hearts pumping. It made their knees go out from under them. It certainly changed things. Has it changed you? If so, tell someone else. You too are a witness of how God has shaken you awake to the presence of the Holy; of how an encounter with Christ has moved you to worship. This moment we're in?--- This is a moment for the earth to quake- for the dead to come alive, for joy to erupt in our bodies and spill out into the world. It is a moment for life to change from dread to hope, from fear to wonder, from going through the motions to experiencing the fullness of time. Our lives

might stay neat and tidy at the sight of an empty tomb, but everything changes when Jesus shows up! Let the earth move and our hearts with it.

So if you find yourself feeling dulled; desensitized to the ongoing bad news in the world; if you find yourself lost in confusion, exhausted by grief, weary from the weight of everyday life- You are invited to the empty tomb. Feel the earth shake; see the lightning strike; listen to the good news and peek inside to where death should lie but doesn't; come and see the empty tomb and run with joy to tell others- you just might be greeted along the way, intercepted by Christ with a smile on his face showing you he's real. He's risen. "The worst thing is not the last thing" as Fredrich Beuchner has said. Death does not have the final word. It has been defeated. That ought to shake us up a bit, rattle our senses, and make our knees bend. Let the earth move and our hearts with it.

Alleluia. Amen