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2 Scripture

- After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.
- There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.
- His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.
- The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

3 Scripture

- The angel said to the women,
 - "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.
 - He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.
 - Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples:
 - 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.
 - There you will see him.'
 - Now I have told you."

4 Scripture

- So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.
- Suddenly Jesus met them.
 - "Greetings," he said.

- They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshiped him.
- Then Jesus said to them,
 - “Do not be afraid.
 - Tell my brothers to go to Galilee; they will see me there.”

5 Introduction

- How many people here tonight fear snakes, bugs, or spiders?
- Many people have intense fears of these creatures.
- Mary Magdalene and the other Mary may have been nervous about snakes, bugs, and spiders when they went to the tomb of Jesus.
- Even if you’re unfazed by slithering reptiles, creeping insects, and crawling creepy stuff, there’s still plenty to fear.

6 Fear of the Dark

- Although most common among children, this fear can follow some people into adulthood.
- The fear is not about darkness but about what dangers might lurk in the shadows.
- It can cause people to start shaking, trembling, or having an overwhelming feeling of panic.
- How many of us as children would jump into bed with mom and dad at night when our imaginations would run away with us?
- Maybe that is why the two women waited until daybreak to make their trip on Easter morning.

7 Fear of Closed Spaces

- That’s another common fear called claustrophobia.
- People with this fear find it unbearable to be inside small spaces such as elevators, closets, and caves.

- Even for some people taking an MRI imaging examination can be terrifying.
- The two women may have felt anxious about entering the tomb of Jesus, which had been carved out of rock.

8 Fear of Death

- While very few people have the desire to die, some have a crippling fear of death.
- It is so overwhelming that they never leave home for fear of a deadly attack or accident.
- Death anxiety can cause a person to become extremely timid or distressed when discussing anything to do with death.
- Predatory death anxiety arises from the fear of being harmed.
- It is the oldest and most basic form of death anxiety.

9 The Top 10 Fears

- The fear of spiders and other creepy bugs.
- The fear of snakes.
- The fear of heights.
- The fear of flying.
- The fear of dogs.
- Fear of thunder and lightning.
- The fear of injections.
- The fear of social interactions.
- The fear of places that are difficult to escape, sometimes involving fear of crowded or open spaces.

- Fear of germs, dirt, and other contaminants.
- Fear of long sermons.

10 Easter Morning

- We sing about the joy of Easter, but first, we need to name the fear.
- Put yourself in the sandals of the two women as they came to the tomb of Jesus.
- As soon as they arrived, there “was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it” (Matthew 28:2).

11 Easter Morning

- Some people have a fear of earthquakes, called seismophobia.
- It is part of the family of fears called catastrophobia, the fear of disasters.
- No one would blame the two women if they were frightened by this violent earthquake.
- But at least the angel opened the tomb, which meant ...
 - no more fear of the dark or
 - fear of closed spaces.

12 Easter Morning

- The angel's appearance “was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow” (v. 3).
- The soldiers who had been posted to guard the tomb “were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men” (v. 4).
- Who could blame them for being overwhelmed with fear?

13 Fear Not

- Then the angel told the women, “Do not be afraid” (v. 5).
- He knew what they were feeling and wanted to comfort and encourage them.
- Psychologist and pastor Bill Gaultiere says that “Fear not!” is “the most repeated command in the Bible.
- In fact, it has been said that there are 365 ‘Fear nots’ in the Bible — one ‘Fear not’ for every day of the year!”

14 Fear Not

- The command can be given in a variety of forms, such as
 - “Do not be afraid” or
 - “Do not let your hearts be troubled,”
 - but the message is always the same:
 - Know that God is with you,
 - giving you peace and grace amid stress, danger, or uncertainty.

15 The Toughest Commandment?

- “Fear not” is a very common command.
- But it is more easily said than done.
- In fact, it is probably the toughest of God’s commandments to keep.
- Of course, some people might dispute this.
- They’ll say that the Ten Commandments are the hardest: “Remember the sabbath day ... Honor you father and your mother ... You shall not murder ... You shall not commit adultery ... You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:8, 12-15).

16 The Toughest Commandment?

- Others will say that Jesus gave the most difficult commands in his Great Commandment:
 - "Love the Lord your God ...
 - Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).
- There is no question that this kind of love is an enormous challenge.
- Pastor Andy Butler writes that "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44) is "the hardest commandment."
- The Ten Commandments. The Great Commandment of Jesus. The challenge to love your enemies. All are very difficult commandments to keep.
- But I believe none are as tough as "Fear not!"

17 The Toughest Commandment?

- We have trouble with "Fear Not" because we are afraid of so much.
- We fear ...
 - the deaths of loved ones,
 - serious illnesses,
 - not having enough money for retirement,
 - business failures, or losing our jobs,
 - criminal activity, and general lawlessness in our society.
- We see so many threats to our well-being that we can hardly believe it when we hear the words, "Fear not!"

18 Good News Replaces Fear

- But the words that the angel spoke to the women on Easter morning are also meant for us.

- “Do not be afraid,” he said.
- “I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.
- He is not here; he has risen, just as he said” (Matthew 28:5-6).
- The very worst thing that could possibly happen — the death of God’s Son on the cross — has now been overcome by the resurrection.
- Darkness has been replaced by light, and death has been replaced by new life.

19 Good News Replaces Fear

- “Then go quickly and tell his disciples,” said the angel.
 - ““He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.
 - There you will see him.” (v. 7).
- The promise of the angel is that Jesus is going ahead of us and has not forgotten about us.
- We do not need to fear the future because Jesus is in it.
- He calls us forward and promises to meet us in what lies ahead.

20 Good News Replaces Fear

- To tell you the truth, most of our fears are grounded in uncertainty about the future.
 - We don’t want to get on an airplane because we fear it will crash.
 - We put off having children because we are worried about the dangers they will face.
 - We are nervous about retirement because we fear that we have not saved enough money.
- When we are stressed by uncertainty, we difficulty keeping the commandment “Fear Not!”

- Nevertheless, we can lay aside our fears when we realize that Christ has risen just as he promised and now sit above all authorities, powers, and woke politicians.

21 Good News Replaces Fear

- On Easter morning, the two women “hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy” (v. 8).
- Yes, they still felt some fear, but it was beginning to be mixed with joy.
- As they traveled the road, Jesus met and greeted them, and they fell down and worshiped him.
- And what did Jesus say to them?
 - He said, “Do not be afraid.
 - Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me” (v. 10).

22 Good News Replaces Fear

- When Jesus repeats the toughest commandment, “Do not be afraid.”
- The women, this time, can keep the commandment because they see for themselves that Jesus is not dead but has risen from the dead and is now with them.
- He is now actually living out the promise of the name that was given to him before he was born: Immanuel, which means “God with us” (1:23).
- Truly, Jesus is the clearest possible sign that God is with us in the face of every threat to our well-being.

23 All Will Be Well

- Easter gives us the power to live without fear, trusting Jesus to lead us confidently into the future.
- Although we will still face situations that make us anxious and afraid, we do not need to be overwhelmed.
- We can give our fears to the Lord, who conquered death and is waiting for us in the future.

24 All Will Be Well

- The Apostle Paul was facing a number of terrifying threats to his well-being: Imprisonment, floggings, shipwrecks, and danger from bandits and other opponents.
- And yet, because he believed that Christ was raised from the dead, he could say (Romans 8:35, 37, 39)
 - “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”
 - Shall trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, or sword?
 - No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.
 - Nothing in all creation. said Paul, “will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

25 All Will Be Well

- Over a thousand years later, an English holy person named Julian of Norwich said, “All will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.”
- This was not just wishful thinking for Julian because she had life-long struggles during a time when there was a devastating pandemic and a political revolution.
- But she could say “all will be well” because she discovered the true meaning of God’s love.
- It is not warm fuzzies or a sense of warmth or peace.
- It is “help” in times of trouble.

26 All Will Be Well

- While God has not promised us a trial-free life, he has instead promised us help in the midst of our trials, no matter the situation or circumstances.
- Yes, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

- All will be well, and every kind of thing will be well.
- We can keep the commandment "Fear not!" because we have a risen Lord who has overcome everything or anything that can hurt or destroy us.
- Because Jesus has been raised, we do not have to be afraid.