

Easter Sermon 2025: Hope Comes Gently

Readings: Acts 10:34–43 & Luke 24:1–12

It starts quietly.

Before sunrise.

The world still half-asleep.

Some women walk to the tomb where Jesus' body was placed.

They carry spices, love, grief.

They expect silence. Stillness. Death.

Because people don't come back from the dead—do they?

They had watched him die.

They had seen the stone rolled in place.

They knew how the story was supposed to end.

But what they find is not what they expected.

The stone is rolled away.

The tomb is empty.

Jesus is gone.

In Luke's gospel, the women are perplexed, confused. And rightly so.

They don't see resurrection -
They see absence.
They see the loss of the one they love, all over again.
No body to anoint.
No closure to claim.

It doesn't make sense.
Not yet.

Then two figures in dazzling clothes appear beside them, saying:

*"Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here, but has risen."*

Even hearing those words, it's hard to grasp.
Resurrection is not just unexpected—it's inconceivable.
How do you begin to believe something you've never seen before?

It's breathtaking. It's holy.
But it's also a moment of shock, of fear, of wonder.

But still, something in them stirs.
They run to tell the others—but their story is dismissed.

Luke tells us it seemed to the others like an “idle tale.” Just women talking nonsense.

But is it really so surprising?

Resurrection doesn’t make sense in the way we want it to. It doesn’t follow the rules of how we think the world works.

And yet... some part of it does make sense—not with logic, but with longing.

Because deep down, we all want the story not to end in death. We all want the darkness not to have the last word.

We all hope—even if we don’t quite dare to believe—that love might outlast grief.

And then there’s Peter.

Peter, who denied Jesus three times.

Peter, who wept bitterly when he realized what he had done.

That Peter runs to the tomb.
He bends down.
Peers inside.
And what he sees—linen cloths, and nothing else—
leaves him amazed.

Why?
Because the linen cloths tell a different kind of story.

Grave robbers wouldn't take time to unwrap a body.
If Jesus were simply moved, someone would know.

Peter sees signs of absence that speak of *presence*.
A strange kind of presence that awakens hope.
He doesn't fully understand yet. But something breaks
open inside him— something he had buried along
with Jesus. Hope.

Maybe resurrection isn't something you *grasp* all at
once. Maybe it's something that *grabs hold of you*,
and refuses to let go.

A quiet, yet confident hope.

Later, in Acts, Peter tries to put words around what it all means. He says:

“I truly understand that God shows no partiality.”

That's a big statement. Especially coming from someone who once thought God's promises were for his people alone.

But Peter has seen what resurrection does. Peter has seen how it changes everything—how it reaches beyond borders and boundaries, beyond shame and failure, beyond death.

Peter says that Jesus is Lord of all—and that the forgiveness, peace, and new life he brings isn't just for some. It's for everyone.

The empty tomb is good news—then and now.

Good news, because this story is not just something that happened.

It's something that happens.
Still.

Again and again.

Because Easter is not just about one miracle on one day. It's a whole new way of seeing the world.

It's the power of love where there was once fear.

It's the quiet courage of hope in the face of despair.

It's the possibility of peace where there has been conflict.

It happens every time someone chooses love instead of hate.

Every time someone steps out of shame and into grace.

Every time despair gives way—just a little—to courage.

Every time we name someone's humanity instead of reducing them to a label.

Every time we forgive, include, embrace, rebuild.

It happens when someone hears their name—like Mary—and knows they are seen.

It happens when a tomb is empty, and our hearts begin to fill again.

It is because of these that we can say—
love is stronger than death.

That light shines in the darkness.
That hope is never truly gone.

We saw it in the early Church, who didn't just say it.
They lived it.

They lived it in catacombs, in prisons, in persecution.
They lived it when they broke bread with strangers and shared what they had.

They lived it by choosing joy even in sorrow.
By telling the story of resurrection not with certainty—
but with courage.

Because like that first Easter morning,
hope doesn't always shout.
Sometimes it whispers.
Hope doesn't always arrive with fanfare or certainty.

Sometimes it slips in, quietly, like the first light of dawn.

Sometimes it flickers like a candle in the night.
But it does not go out.

Because just like when Jesus whispered, ‘Mary’ when Jesus calls your name, you don’t forget it.
When the tomb is empty,
you don’t need all the answers—
you just need to begin to believe again.

Even if that is gently.

Even slowly.

Even quietly.

So today, may you know:
That love is stronger than death.
not because death isn’t real,
but because love doesn’t end with the grave.

That the light does shine in the darkness—
not by pretending everything’s fine,
but by refusing to let the darkness be final.

That hope is never truly gone—
because Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed.

And everything has changed.

Even us.

Amen.