

“The Eighth Day”

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb (Matthew 28:1).

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Most days feel pretty ordinary. You get up and get dressed. You make the coffee and check your messages. You move through the tasks in front of you without much thought, one day rolls into another, and life settles into its usual rhythm and routine. Same old, same old. But not today. Today is different. Today isn't just a normal box on the calendar. No, this day breaks the pattern. In fact, this day changes everything.

Easter is never just another day. In fact, Easter is the eighth day. This phrase, “the eighth day,” may be new to you and may sound a little out of place, because we just heard from Matthew that Jesus rose on the first day of the week. Very early in the morning, after the Sabbath, the women went to the tomb. They came carrying spices. They came expecting death. They came ready to offer one final act of love for the lifeless body they assumed would still be there. But when they arrived, the stone had been rolled away. And the tomb was empty. And the angelic announcement was clear: “He is not here. He has risen.”

And all of this happened on the first day of the week. Yet, over time, the Church began to call this day by another title. It was not only the first day, but it was also the eighth day. Because, you see, Easter is not simply the beginning of another week. It is the beginning of a new creation. The first creation was marked by seven days. Six days of creating followed by the Sabbath rest, and this seven-day rhythm still shapes our lives. Work and rest. Morning and evening. Joy and sorrow. Birth and death. The whole world moves inside this pattern. But then Easter arrives, and the pattern is shattered.

The eighth day is the new day. It is the day after the old week has run its course. It is the day when the old world comes to its end, and God starts something new. And that is what the resurrection of Jesus means. Not just that one man came back to life. Not just a sad story that had a happy ending. No, Easter means that in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, the new world has begun.

That is why the eighth day matters so much in the Bible. Long before Easter, God used the eighth day as the day of new beginnings. For instance, in the Old Testament, circumcision happened on the eighth day, and priests began their service on the eighth day. Certain cleansings were completed on the eighth day, and, throughout salvation history, the eighth day marked a new start, a holy beginning, a work of God that pointed beyond what came before. And all of it was leading here, and it was all pointing to Jesus. Because in Jesus, God was not just tweaking the old world. He was making all things new!

Think about the shape of Holy Week. On Good Friday, Jesus took the old world into Himself. He embraced its sin. He felt its filth. He suffered its curse. He absorbed its guilt. He died the death it deserved and He bore the full weight of our rebellion in His own body on the tree. He was cut off for us, judged for us, forsaken for us. He entered the deepest darkness of this fallen world and carried all of it to the cross.

Then came the Sabbath. And on the Sabbath, He rested in the tomb. And this matters too, because, just as God rested on the seventh day after the work of creation, the Son of God rested after the work of redemption. His labor was complete. His sacrifice was finished. Nothing needed to be added. Nothing remained undone. And then, after the Sabbath, came the first day, the new day, *the eighth day*. But Jesus did not rise into the old way of life. It wasn't like He had escaped death to simply return to business as

usual. No. He rose into the life of the age to come. He rose as the firstfruits. He rose as the beginning. He rose as our Victor over death for us.

That is why Easter is more than simply a comfort for sad people, though it certainly is that. It is, first and foremost, a victory. It is an invasion. It is a new creation, and it is life breaking the way of the old world. It is God declaring, once and for all, that sin does not win, that death does not reign, and that the grave does not get the final word. No! Jesus does. And this world-altering, life-changing truth means everything. It means your sin does not get the last word. It means that your shame does not get the last word. Your past does not get the last word. Your sorrow does not get the last word. Your diagnosis does not get the last word. The cemetery does not get the last word. Not even death itself gets to speak in the end. Only Jesus does. And the word He speaks brings life.

When the women came looking for Jesus, they were looking for Him as one still under the power of death. They came expecting grief. They came expecting silence. They came expecting the world to go on exactly as it had the day before. But Easter does not let the world go on as before. And that's still hard for us to get our heads around. How often do we act as though sin is stronger than grace? How often does our fear still control the future? How often do we treat Easter as just another day?

But this is not just another day. *Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!* My friends, this is resurrection day, and because Christ is risen, this world is no longer closed in on itself. Because Christ is risen, death has been defeated from the inside. And because Christ is risen, the new creation is not only something we will experience someday, it has already begun. And this is where Easter becomes deeply personal. Because the eighth day is not just about Jesus, it is a truth that Jesus shares with you. That is why the Church has always connected Easter to Baptism.

In the Old Testament, the covenant sign of circumcision was given on the eighth day. In the New Testament, Paul tells us that Baptism is the fulfillment of that promise. This means that in your Baptism, you were joined to Jesus. You were buried with Him. You were raised with Him, and just as His death becomes your death to sin, His resurrection becomes the beginning of your new life with God. Traditional baptismal fonts like ours have eight sides, and that shape is not accidental. It is a message in marble and a sermon in stone, because at the font, the eighth day claims you. Here, the old Adam is drowned. Here, the new man rises. Here, the death and resurrection of Jesus are not just remembered...they are given!

So yes, the eighth day has already begun, yet we live each day in the tension of the now and the not yet. Christ is risen, and yet our still bodies ache. Christ is risen, and yet our sinful flesh still clings to us. Christ is risen, and yet we still attend funerals. Christ is risen, and yet tears still flow. But Easter teaches us to see and understand all of these things in a different way. The sorrow is real, but it is not final. The grave is present, but it is not victorious. The struggle is persistent, but it is not ultimate, because, in the risen Christ, the new creation has already begun. This means the cemetery is no longer a place of endings, but a place of waiting. It means the faithful who have died are not gone, but are resting. And it means that a day is coming when the same Savior who walked out of His own tomb will call you from yours.

And so, this morning, do not reduce Easter to an outdated tradition. Do not make it simply a celebration of spring. Do not treat it as just another day on the calendar. This is the centerpiece. This is the turning point. This is the day that changed our world forever. *Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia!* The tomb is empty. The future has begun. Death has been defeated, and the new creation has come! Today is the eighth day, and you belong to it. Go with the peace of this promise God has made to you today, and all God's people say, "Amen!"

Pastor Thomas A. Eggold