

EASTER SUNDAY  
FIRST LUTHERAN, MARSHALL

APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2015  
PASTOR SCOTT FULLER

Psalm 118:19-24; Matthew 28:1-10  
*Dreams Come True*



*Prepare our hearts, Lord, to receive your Word. Silence in us any voice but your own that in hearing we may believe and in believing we may obey your will revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*Dear friends in Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*

What an impossibly remarkable plot there is to this greatest story ever told. The sudden shift from the **worst possible nightmare** to **best dream come true** must have left Jesus' followers with a spiritual sense of whiplash.

Let's start with Good Friday. Though the nightmare had begun the night before with Jesus' betrayal and arrest, it was nothing more than a daydream compared to the horror that would unfold leading up to the hill called Golgotha. Two women saw it all: Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph.

They were there when Jesus died on the cross.  
They were there when Jesus was laid in the tomb.  
They knew firsthand how dreams can turn to nightmares.

This terrible twist reminds me of a book by C. S. Lewis called: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. It's in his *Chronicles of Narnia* series. Do any *Narnia* fans here remember the story?

A small but brave crew of the beloved ship, *The Dawn Treader*, sails into uncharted waters ***and***...experiences an amazing assortment of adventures. One that is most surprising ***and***, ultimately, **disturbing** begins with a very strange sight.

Out in the middle of the open ocean, they **come** upon what **appears** to be the entrance to a large, dark cave. **Unnerved**, but **intrigued**, the crew readies themselves for battle, the ship for security, and lights every lamp they have...**then** they slowly push forward into that **strange**, darkened **hole**.

**Can anyone tell us what they find?** Soon they pick up a shipwrecked sailor floating in the darkness. No sooner is he on board, when the man begins to **beg** them to turn around and sail as **quickly** as they **can** back to the **light** and the **freedom** of the open seas. He **warns** the crew that they are in

grave danger, for they have entered a **magical** place...a **place** where *dreams come true*.

Well, at **first**...that sounds like **great** news to everyone... Could **you** imagine it? – **living** in a place where your wildest dreams become **reality**?!?!

*Yet fervently* the man persists with his **urgent** plea to **flee**...but to no avail. The temptation to experience their hearts' desires is just too great...

**Finally**, though, he's able to break through their glossy-eyed imaginings by **reminding** them that mixed-in with an occasional dream that delights us, **are**, of course, those *nightmares* that **scare** the **life** out of us. *What dreams may also come true*, they realize, are those that torment, terrify, haunt and harass us...

One by one, they begin to see the light in that fear-filled darkness, and quickly put their hands to the oars – pulling for **all** they're worth, fleeing from that darkness of despair.

**This**, is where the two Mary's, as well as the other followers of Jesus, found themselves on that first Easter morning. After his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, I'm guessing they were all **very** eager to see what **other** dreams would come true...

Yet how quickly they came to discover that, as we cannot control the delight or drama of our dreams, so, too, the pleasure OR pain of much of life is beyond our control. No, **Jesus'** death on the **cross** seemed to signal the death of **all** their dreams...for **all** of **life**...for **all people** of **all time**.

So, when *Mary Magdalene and the other Mary* make their way through the streets early on that first day of the week, their hearts numb with grief – **both** for their **teacher** AND for his followers' dreams.

**Certain** that it couldn't get any worse...they experience an earthquake – and on top of that, they see a strange, bright being seated on the stone that had been used to seal Jesus inside. Their heads must have been swimming!

Yet the first glimmer of good news comes from the angel who says, *Jesus is not here – he has been raised, as he said.* The next spark of hope comes in his charge to the women: *Go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead.’*

But it’s not until they leave, with equal parts *fear and great joy*, that their walk through the valley of the shadow of death opens up to the green pastures of resurrection and grace.

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, in the split-second it takes to speak a simple word, the **nightmare** of their souls becomes the **dream** of a lifetime, a dream for *all* life and for *all* time.

*Greetings*, says the Lord of the Dance of Life, and their terror is changed to treasure, their despair to delight, their heartache to happiness, their grief to an *amazing* grace. They fall at his feet and worship the Lord before *Jesus* sends them forth, the *first* to share this very good news for all the world

Now, **imagine** yourself watching the two Mary’s **leave** the house earlier in that cold hour *before* dawn... then imagine watching them return to share this sensational story... were they cool, calm and collected? Did they smile *subtly*, shrug *shyly*, and speak *softly*? **Or**, do you suppose they *burst* into the room breathlessly *laughing*, faces *beaming* and voices *booming*, *We have seen the Lord!* - - -

Lazarus Laughed is the title of a play by Eugene O’Neil about the friend that Jesus raised from the dead. Set in the days after the **first** Easter, Lazarus encounters the pain of **many** people, from his family and friends to Emperor Caligula. Through all his experiences, sad AND joyful, **Lazarus laughs**... he can’t **help** it, he has to laugh, he explains, for he has seen that God *delights* in life.

In the last scene of the play when he laughs even at his *own* death, a chorus chants: *Laugh! Laugh! There is only God! Life is His Laughter! **We** are His Laughter! Fear is **no more!** Death is **dead!***

Now **that** is something to **dream** about. If Death is dead, if our fears of failure AND finality are discarded like **Jesus’ death clothes**, then *we* are **truly** free to laugh and love, to dance and dream, to speak and sing – **free** to live *as if* **God’s Word** is real. Imagine *the dreams that could come true* if

we all lived our lives with such laughter of the spirit filling our hearts and lives with joy!

**This** is God's gift to **us** on **Easter**: *Jesus Christ* is alive and well, laughing and dancing, forgiving and freeing – *all* so that **we**, like the two **Mary's**, might **dare** to **dream** and **shout** and **sing**:

Christ is risen! (He is risen indeed!) (3X) Amen.