

# The Resurrection of Our Lord

## AMAZED BY LIFE

Mark 16:1-8

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## Analysis by Lori A. Cornell

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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## DIAGNOSIS: Bearing the Weight of Death

**Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) :** *Grieving the Process*

"Who will roll the stone away?" According to Mark, it was the first and only question the women could bring themselves to ask as they anticipated their trip to Jesus' tomb. They were not so

much in the “process of grieving,” as we call it in the 21st century (grieving, with its five distinct steps experienced in sequence); rather they were “grieving the process” of laying Jesus’ body to rest for good. They’d put it off to observe the Sabbath, and now they faced the inevitable: anointing and burying the dead Jesus-for good.

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) :** *Grieving Jesus*

But maybe more than grieving the process of burying Jesus, they were grieving Jesus’ life, and all that they’d imagined he would be. His prospects had seemed so promising: not only had he healed the sick, exorcised demons, and practiced divine mercy, he’d done it graciously. He had genuinely cared for them and the rest of the restless throng that surrounded Jesus. But no more. Their hopes for finding a merciful savior in Jesus were to be wrapped up in the tomb with his dead body. There’s no such thing as a dead savior.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) :** *Grieving Life*

Hoping in a savior who ends up dying, is having hope die. But what was that hope about to begin with? Had the women hoped that God actually cared, and now they were disappointed? Or was their disappointed hope simply a confirmation that any savior was more than they had a right to expect from God? Maybe a dead savior was all they deserved. No wonder they were seized by terror and amazement at the unrealistic prospect that “he has been raised”!

## **PROGNOSIS: Bearing the Weight of Death, and Life**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) :** *Bearing Life to Terrorized Hearts*

And doesn’t terror and amazement seize all of us-when confronted with the prospects of a dying-but-living savior? What have we done to deserve this?! What in the world is God up to with this theophany? See, (despite our vehement denial), we still think being cared about and saved by God is about deserving (just do

the right thing, say the right thing, or invest in the right guy at the right time in the right way). But it's all gift. (Perhaps that's why some still cling to the belief that when another saves your life, you give the rest of your existence to that savior. You hand your life over to the one who has gifted you-when all you had in your future was death.) Gift: "Jesus, who was crucified, has been raised." Jesus, the Savior, is raised for once-zealous-but-recently-denying disciples ("go tell the disciples and Peter," v. 7); for devoutly bereft women who come to the tomb-comfortable with death but terrorized by life (v. 8); for skeptical 21st-century spiritual practitioners who find themselves scandalized by the unlikely prospect that God exists, let alone cares. To such as these God puts flesh and blood on his promises and walks mockingly away from the finality of death. And he does this, not for himself-God knows what he's capable of; he does it for the likes of us. Gift.

**Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (External Solution) :** *Receiving Life*  
Saved by a dead-but-now-living Savior, we are left with one question: Is this Savior who is "for us," for us? And while we might want to leap up, declaring "Yes, of course!", the truth is that terror and amazement regularly seizes us, and we turn away silent-not quite knowing what to make of this unexpected twist in God's mighty acts of salvation. Yet, we know, the truth remains that God is up to the very best good through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. And, so, while terror and amazement may render us silent for a time, it will not own our tongues. Because, in Jesus, God is in fact for us-the gift is already ours. And we, who find ourselves inarticulate in the face of such good news, are compelled by the Holy Spirit to shout: "Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!"

**Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) :** *Bearing and Living the Life*

Those words, "Christ is risen," own us. We are borne up by and

bathed in Christ's death and resurrection. What we have received as a gift, we now bear: Life in Christ. And because Christ has spared our lives through his death, we willingly surrender ours to him. When we say, "Christ is risen," we mean we are risen in Christ. God cares. We also mean that Christ is risen for those who are still seized by the terror of death, and the fear of trusting that God cares. But knowing God's flesh-and-blood promises in Jesus, praise overpowers our silence and we speak at last: "Death could not hold Jesus, nor does it hold you. Receive Christ-as pure gift-and be amazed!"