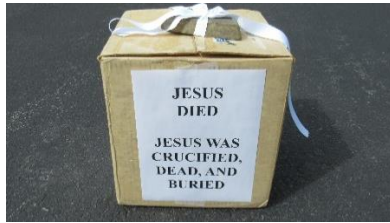


Interactive lesson



picture from MMMS collection

What do we say happened on Good Friday?

Through Saturday and very early Sunday, what did the disciples think about Jesus?

What happened early on Easter morning?

Was it what they expected?

What do you think is in the box?

Can you do to the box like the angel of the Lord did to the tomb, remove the stone and open it?

What is inside?

Would you like an egg?

What is inside the egg?

I want you to go and share what is on the paper with someone here.

What happened when you shared the message?

What do you think we are supposed to do in the world outside of this building with the news about Jesus?

Let us share the great news of God's love and Jesus's resurrection with everyone, that the whole world may be blessed in the sharing. And do not assume that you know what those blessings will be - God gifts us in ways we do not expect. Have faith in and give thanks

for the awesomeness God brings to our lives!

Gospel lesson

We resume reading from the Gospel of John after Jesus was laid in the tomb and the Sabbath day passed.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>

John 20:1-18

NRSV

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb.

⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there,

⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself.

⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;

⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;

¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet.

¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried

him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

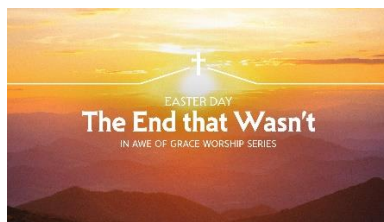
¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Cristo Vive"

UMH #313

Message: The End that Wasn't



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/in-awe-of-grace/easter-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Awesome living Lord Jesus,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may celebrate fully the incredible gift of

Your life and resurrection for us. Amen.

Our Holy Week series "In Awe of Grace" concludes today with "The End that Wasn't":

"You will see him, that's the message of Easter.

You will see him, the living one, the alive one, him. And in that seeing, you'll be able to breathe deeply again. Happy Easter."



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/tax-documents-on-the-table-6863244/>;
photo credit Nataliya Vaitkevich

On Saturday, income taxes are due. It is important to pay our taxes so that we can have paved roads, public schools, local fire departments, police, and that sort of thing. We all pitch in for the community to have better than we as individuals could manage. I bet you really feeling like celebrating taxes, huh?

It is said that the only two things in life that are certain are death and taxes. I have also heard it said that life is fatal, because everything that live, dies. Even Jesus died.

But what did Jesus show us about death? That God has power over it, to restore us to full life as we were created to live it. Our wayward sin drives us to death, but God can fix it so we live, if we let 'im.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-101-jesus-resurrection/>

Death is not the end! Easter is our shock and awe day, the day when we see that [the one unavoidable thing that is supposed to be the end of life] is actually the start of truly living, without the decay of sin and fear of death hanging over us!

The Jews thought the Messiah was just for them, but we just heard Peter clarify that Jesus came for everyone – for you and you and you and me, too! Salvation is not exclusive; rather, God's love is inclusive, and we should live that way.

The psalmist marvels at how God took the stone the builders rejected and made it the cornerstone. What people think is done, beyond hope, God renews and builds upon for wonders we do not even imagine before they are in front of us.

Paul tells us to set our minds on things above, on Christ, so that we can live with Him in God's glory. If you have struggles, have figuratively crashed and burned, if you have emotional scars from past experiences and feel some part of your life is discarded – take heart! God wants to build you from that with love into something uniquely beautiful and astonishing!

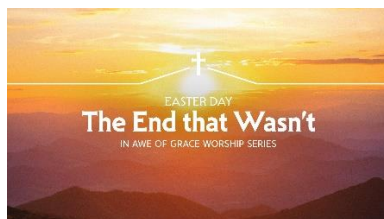


picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/jesus-alive/>

No one seemed to understand at first about Jesus coming back from the dead, even though He had told them at least three times about what would happen. Mary and the disciples thought someone had taken the body, further indignity after His horrible death.

So accustomed to sinful world death, they had to see Jesus alive for themselves before they could understand what He foretold to them. Once He had shown them evidence of His life beyond death, the possibility of a new beginning, then they began to see that death, the end, wasn't the end at all.

Jesus made death both more and less certain for us. We are certain that we need to die to sin, and then in life with Christ we will never die.



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/in-awe-of-grace/easter-sunday-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/easter-sunday-year-a-graphics>

What seems like painful endings just sets the stage for amazing new beginnings, building upon our experiences for something unique and beautiful. And not just for us, but for everyone around us. So we should nurture life in Christ for everyone, that all of creation may reflect God's glory more clearly.

Tell the world in straightforward ways about the love of God in Jesus:

- † Praise God for the blessings we have!
- † Tell about the resurrection and why it matters.
- † Show God's love by helping others - both one another in Christ and those who are outside of your normal circles.

It is a lot less taxing than living in sin or denying God. You get blessed in unexpected ways.

The great I AM, God, IS. Jesus IS - love, alive, returned to us, neverending. The Holy Spirit IS - with us, in our midst. Be astonished, and then let us celebrate the wondrous end that wasn't, that brought us new beginnings, new life. Happy Easter!