

## **Saturday and Sunday**

### **[John 20: 1-18](#)**

**Rev. Curtis Bablitz**

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Saturday was a long day for the disciples. On Friday, their entire world came crashing down – all their hopes, their dreams, everything they thought they knew about how the world worked and what the future had in store for them, all of it collapsed in an instant. Jesus was dead, and that meant all their plans for his kingdom and their part in that kingdom, it all meant nothing. Instead the disciples spent all day Saturday in hiding, afraid to go outside. Saturday was the Sabbath, the day of rest, but they weren't just staying home to rest, they were staying home because they were afraid. The world was a dangerous place for them now – if they went out, they might be arrested and executed by the same authorities who had just killed their leader. They are alone, they are frightened, they are in danger, there is nowhere to go and nothing to do and no hope that this will ever change, ever get better, ever be anything different. For the disciples, that Saturday must've felt like it was going to go on forever, like it was going to last for the rest of their lives.

And then on Sunday morning, as soon as the Sabbath ends, Mary Magdalene decides to head to Jesus' tomb for one last look at all her old hopes and dreams, and when she gets there, she finds that the tomb is empty – the stone's been rolled away, the body is gone. She runs back

home as fast as she can, and she tells Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, that the body is gone, that someone has taken it away. The three of them rush back to the tomb to confirm this awful news – as if things weren't bad enough, as if they weren't already suffering enough, now they had to deal with grave robbers. But when they get there, they see the linen body wrappings lying there, along with a neatly folded head cloth, little details that don't make sense if this was a robbery. They don't know what to make of it, they can't explain what they see – there's the beginning of an idea of what might have happened, a dim memory of those promises that they had heard in the Scriptures and from Jesus himself, about the Messiah rising from the dead, but it's still too much to understand. So they go back home. They go back to hiding and waiting in safety, they go back to Saturday. There at the tomb, they caught a glimpse, the briefest glimpse of something new, something that was promised to them, they've caught a glimpse of Sunday morning, but then they go back home, back to safety, back to Saturday.

All except Mary. Mary stays in the garden, weeping for Jesus, weeping for everything she has lost, and not even the sudden appearance of two angels can break through Mary's sadness and despair. Even when a man approaches her and asks her why she is crying, she can't see anything but what she already thinks is true. It's only when the man speaks her name – when he says to her, Mary, that's the moment when everything changes. Suddenly Mary realizes that it's Jesus, Jesus is standing there in front of her,

he's alive, and he speaks words of comfort and peace and strength to this frightened and wounded disciple, and all of a sudden there in that garden, it's no longer Saturday, Saturday is finally over, it's Easter Sunday at last. The greatest miracle in human history has happened, the greatest victory in the story of creation has been completed, the tomb is empty, death has been defeated, the chasm of sin and pain that's always stood between God and humanity has been bridged, once and for all, there in that garden, Jesus shows up, and Mary is filled with Joy, because Saturday is over. She has nothing to fear, nothing to worry about any longer. What can anyone do to her if death is meaningless? What threats can her enemies hold over her head if Jesus is on her side? Jesus is alive, he is risen, Saturday is over, Sunday is here.

And then Mary rushes back to the rest of the disciples, to tell them this amazing news, to tell them what she's witnessed, that it's Sunday morning and Jesus is alive. But the disciples can't hear her, because for the disciples, it's still Saturday. They hear Mary's story. They know what Peter saw in the tomb. They remember all those promises, all those predictions, all those passages of Scripture that predicted with pinpoint accuracy exactly what would happen to Jesus, they know all that, but none of that makes any difference to the world they're living in, the day they're living on, because they haven't seen what Mary saw, they haven't heard what Mary heard, and until they witness for themselves that Jesus is alive, until then they're still

stuck on Saturday, waiting for hope, waiting for life, waiting for the world to be transformed, waiting for Jesus to bring them back to life.

All that day, the disciples stay inside, hiding behind locked doors, living as if it's still Saturday, while Mary desperately tries to get through to them, to make them understand what has happened, what Jesus has accomplished. And even when Jesus appears to them that evening, and they see for themselves that he is alive, they still stay behind locked doors. Eight days later, they're still in hiding when Jesus shows up again and reveals himself to Thomas. Even after they know that Jesus is alive, they still spend the next forty days still in hiding, learning from Jesus, trying to understand more about what has happened, about how the world has so fundamentally changed. And when Jesus ascends into heaven, the disciples will spend another ten days alone, behind closed doors, praying and preparing for the coming of the Holy Spirit. It isn't until Pentecost, fifty days after Easter, when the disciples finally leave the locked rooms behind forever and go out into the world to tell everyone they meet about what Jesus has accomplished for them. Until then, the disciples are living in two different worlds at the same time. They know what Jesus has done, the victory that he's won, but it isn't entirely real yet. They're living in the reality that Jesus is alive, but they're still waiting for the promise of what that will mean, what that will mean for them and for the entire world. They're living on Sunday, Easter Sunday, the Sunday of resurrection, but they're also still living on

Saturday, still waiting, still unsure, still a little bit afraid of what the future might hold.

And we're still living in those two worlds as well. Easter is both a reality and a promise. It is God's victory over sin and death, the once and for all destruction of everything that could ever stand in the way of God's kingdom of justice and love ruling over all creation, but it's also a promise that the full and complete realization of that victory is still on the way. We know that Jesus is alive. We know that he is risen, that death has lost its grip on us, that we have nothing to fear, and yet the world still doesn't act like this is true. The world still goes on as if Easter hasn't happened, as if it's still Saturday, still business as usual, as if selfishness and cruelty and pride can still win out in the end. We live in the now and the not yet, we live on Saturday and Sunday, and even though we know what Jesus has done for us, even though we remember his promises we read in the scriptures, and we've heard the stories that Mary and Peter and all the other disciples have passed down to us, somedays it is still so hard to believe that Sunday will ever get here. It still feels like it's going to be Saturday forever. Everywhere we look, we see the signs of this world's brokenness, of our own brokenness, and it can feel like there is nothing we can do to fix that brokenness, to repair what we have ruined, to restore what we have destroyed. We are living in the middle of a long, long Easter Saturday, waiting with fear and uncertainty for a sign of hope. But even in our doubt, even in our fear, nothing can change the sure and certain truth that Sunday

is coming. The tomb is already empty. Jesus Christ is already risen. We've heard the stories, we've seen the signs, we know the promises God has made to us and for us, we're just waiting for the moment when we figure it out, when we hear the Lord call our name, and our eyes are opened and we realize that the risen Christ is here with us, that he's alive, that it's Sunday morning and the world will never be the same again. The World cannot be the same again. The victory has already been won. There is nothing in the universe that can stop Christ's reign of love and justice from coming finally and fully here where we are and everywhere we go.

We are Sunday people living in a Saturday world. We are people who have seen the Risen Christ, who know he's alive, and we've been given the gift of sharing that news with a world that is afraid, a world in hiding, a world that believes there is nothing else but pain and death and danger all around. We are called to live with hope, to live with confidence, to remind the world around us of the promise of Easter Sunday, the promise of resurrection, the promise that death has been defeated and we have nothing to fear. We are Sunday people, and today and everyday, we can live like that's true, live like Jesus is alive, and share his love any way we can, share his love with those who are waiting to hear the good news. Today is Easter Sunday, and while we wait for God's promise to be finally, fully fulfilled, let us live like it's already here, let us live like Jesus is alive, like Jesus is King, like his peace and love are all around us, like his joy is here with us. Today, this Easter Sunday, may Jesus Christ break through every

locked door in your life, may he stand with you wherever you are, may you hear him call your name, may you see his face, may you know his joy.  
Today, Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Hallelujah! Amen!