***Lenten Awakening***

**Lenten Worship Series – Easter SonRise**

***Gifting Life***

**March 31, 2024**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**S  Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. |

[*On screen as people enter or printed in program*]

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| ***Gifting Life***  **The women fell down before Him, kissing His feet and worshiping Him.**  ***Matthew 28:9* (VOICE)** |

***Jesus is Risen***

**Leader:** He is Risen!

**All:** He is Risen, indeed!

**[The Gathering][The Response]**

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| **SB#228/SS#182 – Low in the grave He lay** | TB-905 – Up from the grave he arose  SS-182 | HTD2-T17 (3 vs.) |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#243/HC#164 – Before the throne of God above** | TB-52 – same  HC-164 | No HT CD  HCD15-T14 |
| **SB#276 – Thine is the glory** | TB-746 – Maccabeus | No HT CD |
| **SB#379/HC#78/SS#44 – Lord, I lift Your name on high** | TB-948 – You came from Heaven to earth  HC-78  SS-44 | No HT CD  HCD6-T18 |
| **HC#204 – See, What a Morning** | HC-204 | HCD19-T14 |
| **HC#209 – Come People of the Risen King** | HC-209 | HCD19-T19 |
| **SB#223/HC#278 – I know He rescued my soul (My Redeemer Lives)** | TB-768 – same  HC-278 | No HT CD  HCD26-T18 |
| **HC#294 – Glorious Day** | HC-294 | HCD28-T14 |
| **SB#847/HC#305/SS#35 – I serve a risen Savior (He Lives)** | TB-681 – same  HC-305  SS-35 | HTD6-T10 (3 vs.)  HCD29-T15 |

**[The Response]**

**Invocation**

**[The Gathering] [The Word]**

**Choral Reading:**

**Reader 1: *1****After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

**Reader 2:** Jesus has died, and Mary Magdalene and the other Mary have come to pay their last respects and anoint the body with precious spices. They are grieving.

**Reader 3:** There had been so much promise for a new tomorrow, and now only memories. Only shattered dreams. Only lost hope.

**Reader 2:** Maybe people were right about Jesus’ kingdom of God—the religious realists who dismissed it, the doubters who ridiculed it, the power structures who killed it, the ones who criminalized, condemned, and crucified the hope.

**Reader 1:** They shattered the dream. Even Jesus’ closest followers seemed to be calling it quits.

**Reader 3:** Still, the women came.

**Reader 2:** “Let’s just anoint his body one last time.”

**Reader 3:** The Marys want to say a final farewell to their Lord, perhaps to keep the memories of what could have been and now seems lost. To honor the dream.

**Reader 1:** But perhaps there is still a thread of lingering confidence.

**Reader 3:** Perhaps the women see past the overwhelming evidence of failure to a glimmer of awakening hope, and they cling to it and nurture it deep down, in their quiet way.

**Reader 1:** A part of them remains open to a different outcome, to a Jesus who will not let them down.

**Reader 2:** The tomb greets them in a most unsettling way: a violent earthquake accompanied by a powerful angel, who rolls away the huge stone blocking and sealing the tomb, and then seats himself on it and looks at the two ladies with a calming face.

**Reader 3:** The guards are cowering in fear.

**Reader 1:** ***5****The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.****6****He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”*

(Matthew 28:1-6 adapted, NIV)

(*Lenten Awakening*, p. 205)

**[The Response]**

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| **HC#204 – See, What a Morning** | HC-204 | HCD19-T14 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#228/SS#182 – Low in the grave He lay** | TB-905 – Up from the grave he arose  SS-182 | HTD2-T17 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#243/HC#164 – Before the throne of God above** | TB-52 – same  HC-164 | No HT CD  HCD15-T14 |
| **SB#276 – Thine is the glory** | TB-746 – Maccabeus | No HT CD |
| **SB#379/HC#78/SS#44 – Lord, I lift Your name on high** | TB-948 – You came from Heaven to earth  HC-78  SS-44 | No HT CD  HCD6-T18 |
| **HC#209 – Come People of the Risen King** | HC-209 | HCD19-T19 |
| **HC#250 – Hear the Call of the Kingdom** | HC-250 | HCD23-T20 |
| **SB#223/HC#278 – I know He rescued my soul (My Redeemer Lives)** | TB-768 – same  HC-278 | No HT CD  HCD26-T18 |
| **HC#294 – Glorious Day** | HC-294 | HCD28-T14 |
| **SB#847/HC#305/SS#35 – I serve a risen Savior (He Lives)** | TB-681 – same  HC-305  SS-35 | HTD6-T10 (3 vs.)  HCD29-T15 |

**[The Word]**

**Choral Reading: (Continued)**

**Reader 2:** What is this? What does this strange person mean?

**Reader 1:** “Come, see the place where they laid him,” he says.

**Reader 3:** The women follow him. They are aghast at what they see.

**Reader 2:** Who has stolen the body—and where is it now?

**Reader 3:** Wait, this angel just said the crucified Jesus has been raised from the dead. But where did he go?

**Reader 2:** That, by the way, is the question they will from then on pursue and answer for the rest of their lives, as will we.

**Reader 1:** “Right now, your job is to go find his disciples, who are probably pitying themselves, and tell them the good news.”

**Reader 3:** Suddenly realizing the importance of this shocking revelation, “with great fear and excitement,” the women hurry off to tell the disciples.

**Reader 2:** There’s another surprise for them soon after they depart. A bigger surprise. Jesus is waiting for them along the way.

**Reader 1:** **9** *“Greetings,” he said.*

**Reader 3:** *They came to him,* and stunned by the sight of him, *they fell, clasped his feet and worshiped him.*

(Matthew 28:6-10 adapted, NIV)

(*Lenten Awakening*, pp. 205-206)

**[The Response]**

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| **HC#136 – We All Bow Down** | HC-136 | HCD12-T16 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **HC#166 – We Fall Down** | HC-166 | HCD15-T16 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |

**[The Response]**

**Prayer**

Almighty Lord, thank you for the empty tomb and Jesus’ victory over the grave.  Every soul in all creation shall bow before you. Thank you for the gift of life. Just as Jesus’ death pardoned my sin, his [resurrection](https://www.christianity.com/jesus/death-and-resurrection/resurrection/what-proof-is-there-of-the-resurrection-of-jesus.html) assures my future. Thank you for grace and glory. May my life today be lived by the power of the resurrection.  In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

**[The Word]**

**Message – Jesus Gifting Life**

**[The Response]**

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| **SB#222 – He is Lord, He is Lord,** | TB-649 – same | No HT CD |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#376/HC#219 – King of kings, majesty** | TB-722 – same  HC-219 | No HT CD  HCD20-T19 |
| **HC#226 – I Worship You** | HC-226 | HCD21-T16 |

**[The Response]**

**Testimony – “What the gift of life means to me…” –** [*Choose someone from the congregation who can testify on this theme or have a brief testimony time using only a sentence phrase*.]

**[The Sending]**

**Benediction:**

Risen Lord,

How can I say thanks for the things You have done for me?

Things so underserved, yet You gave to prove Your love for me.

The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude.

All that I am, and ever hope to be, I owe it all to Thee.

Just let me live my life, let it be pleasing, Lord, to Thee;

And if I gain any praise, let it go to Calvary.

With His blood He has saved me;

With His power He has raised me;

To God be the glory for the things He has done.

Amen.

(Words by Andraé Crouch)

**[The Sending]**

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| **HC#128 – My Tribute** | HC-128 | HCD11-T18 |
| **Additional Optional Songs** | | |
| **SB#861/HC#149/SS#41 – In Christ alone** | TB-132 – same  HC-149  SS-41 | No HT CD  HCD13-T19 |
| **SB#89/HC#161/SS#48 – O for a thousand tongues to sing (My Great Redeemer’s Praise)** | TB-57 – Azmon  TB-75 – Grimsby  HC-161  SS-48 | HTD3-T4 (4 vs.)  No HT CD  HCD15-T11 |
| **SB#1031/HC#283 – Lord, if Your presence** | TB-740 – same  HC-283 | No HT CD  HCD27-T13 |
| **HC#309 – Go in Peace, Go in Love** | HC-309 | HCD29-T19 |
| **SB#241 – And can it be** | TB-445 – Sagina | HTD4-T13 (4 vs.) |

***Lenten Awakening***

**Lenten Sermon – Easter SonRise**

***Jesus Gifting Life***

**March 31, 2024**

**By Major Catherine Mount**

**TITLE: Jesus Gifting Life**

**SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:1-10; John 3**

**INTRODUCTION:** Have any of you have ever heard the phrase, “That was life-giving!” I thought this was a generational colloquialism or saying, but this hyphenated word, *life-giving*, can actually be found in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. The definition is: “giving or having power to give life and spirit; invigorating.”[[1]](#endnote-1) Another source said, “strengthening; refreshing; inspiring.”**[[2]](#endnote-2)** As you can imagine, there are a lot of opinions on what activities are life-giving. So if I were to ask you, what is life-giving to you, what might you say? [*Give some personal examples of what you find to be life-giving.*]

I want to challenge us this morning to consider what it means to receive the **gift of life** from Jesus Christ Himself. Turn to **John 3**, so we can set the foundation for this morning. Here we will be reminded of a conversation Jesus had early in His ministry. In John 3, Jesus is having a famous (and maybe even an endearing) conversation with Nicodemus, an influential pharisee (a religious leader/rule follower).

**READ: John 3: 3-7, 16-17**

***3****Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26124a)*]”*

***4****“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”*

***5****Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.****6****Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26127b)*] gives birth to spirit.****7****You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26128c)*] must be born again.’*

***16****For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.****17****For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

At the time of this conversation, Jesus is foreshadowing what is to come! To be born again is to be born of the Spirit, which is made possible because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. This is the **greatest life-giving act of all time**.

If you do a Google search, you’re going to get all kinds of examples of life-giving activity. The internet will tell you that if you cook more, it is life-giving. Well, I can assert from life experience that some people’s cooking will be life-draining, not life-giving, right? The *only* life-giving thing that truly fills and transforms a person’s soul and spirit is the gift of Salvation – the gift of forgiveness and presence that is offered by Jesus Christ, our Lord. The perfect meal, doesn’t compare. The perfect moment with the people you love, doesn’t compare. The perfect moment in God’s beauty and creation, doesn’t compare.

Jesus is the one who gives life. In fact, in John 10:10 (NIV), Jesus says that *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”* The NASB says: *“I came so that they would have life and have* it*abundantly.”*

So what does abundant life look like? Turn with me to Matthew 28. This morning as we celebrate the early morning encounter between Jesus and the women who loved Him, I think there’s some insight into what *abundant* life looks like.

**READ: Matthew 28:1-10**

***1*** *After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.*

***2****There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.****3****His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.****4****The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.*

***5****The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.****6****He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.****7****Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”*

***8****So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.****9****Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.****10****Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”*

Accepting the gift of ABUNDANT LIFE means dealing with our fear. In the epic movie magic in my imagination, I can see this shocking and confident angel, just casually lounging on top of the rolled away gravestone, with the fainted guards on the ground. And what does the angel say? “Don’t be afraid.” Brothers and sisters, when we encounter the news of the Risen Christ, we do not have to be afraid. We don’t need to be fearful about our situations, our feelings, our relationships, or the messenger of the Good News! We can choose LIFE over FEAR! **Life is abundant; Fear is limiting.**

What’s interesting about this scripture is that the women don’t actually stop fearing. Look at verse 8. It says, *“So the women hurried away from the tomb,* ***afraid*** *yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”* The women are still walking in fear, but also joyful at the same time. . .UNTIL they met Jesus. Verse 9 says they fell at His feet and worshipped him. And what does Jesus repeat (v. 10)? *“Do not be afraid.”*

When we accept the gift of life that Jesus has to offer, we do not have to be fearful people. Instead, we can people who worship. **Receiving God’s life-giving gift of salvation doesn’t just give us eternal life. It gives us a purpose for our present, everyday life.** We can trade in the fears that grip us FOR worship and purpose from the One who saves. Can you testify that you have had an encounter with Jesus and His gift of life? These women couldn’t let go of their fear until they encountered their Lord. I wonder if any of us here started this beautiful Sunday morning in the same kind of predicament?

**CHALLENGE: Have you received the gift of life that can only be provided through Jesus Christ?**

What fears do you need to let go of so that you can worship the Lord?

I want to invite you to take a different posture in your seat right now. . .

1. Hold your hands open in front of you (like you’re holding a box)
2. Close your eyes. Imagine you’re holding something in your hands that represents what you fear. What is it that your fear? Name it in your mind. (Ex.: loss, disappointment, death, failure, sin that has a grip on you, worry, etc.)
3. Put that box of fear down and lift up your hands in surrender

Brothers and sisters, we are invited today—and every day—to be worshippers . . .to live abundantly. . . and fully free from fear, worshiping at the feet of our Savior.

**PRAY**

1. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/life-giving [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.google.com/search?q=life+giving&rlz=1C1GCEU\_enUS975US975&oq=life+giving&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i59.1777j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)