When the women arrived at the tomb early Easter morning, the angels greeted them with three unbelievable words of truth: He has risen! And then ne of the angels told them that this miracle should come as no surprise to them: Remember how he told you.

Remember. How many times did Jesus say that to his followers during his earthly ministry? Probably not enough! Scripture describes them as being slow to believe, afraid, people with doubts arising in their minds. Remember.

In our reading, St Paul told young pastor Timothy: Remember. These were some of the last words that Paul ever wrote. He knew that his work on earth for the Lord Jesus was nearing completion, that he would soon suffer a martyr’s death at the hands of the Roms. What does a person about to die think about? Childhood joys? Memories of teenage freedom? Professional accomplishments? Friends? Family? This is what was on Paul’s mind: Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.

The heart of the Christian faith is remembering - remembering what God has done for us. God’s main message for us is not Go and do! but rather See and believe! That is what we remember this Easter morning - the great things Jesus has done for us so that through faith in him we may have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We really cannot do anything else, can we? What else can we do this morning but go to the empty tomb, gaze inside, and then ponder with amazement what this means for us? Nothing! There is nothing else we can do and there is nothing else we need to do. God in his rich grace has done everything for us. He defeated sin, death, and hell. He rose in victory - the guarantee that sin is paid for, the guarantee that by his power he will also raise all who trust in him. He is the one who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians.

How could we possibly forget those great things? Jesus has not changed over the centuries, and the nature of his disciples has not changed much either. We have fears and doubts, and we are also slow to believe. All the more reason to listen to what God says through St Paul this morning: Remember Jesus Christ.

Shakespeare once asked: What is in a name? Much! A person’s name represents everything they are, everything they have done, everything they stand for. We hear names and immediately mental images form in our minds: LeBron James, John McCain, Bruno Mars.

Remember Jesus. God himself gave that name to his Son - the name that means Savior. Jesus came to this earth in the quietness of Christmas on a violent mission. He came to do battle with the forces of hell. Throughout his earthly ministry he undid what sin and Satan had done; he healed the sick, drove out demons, raised the dead. But on Good Friday that the battle reached its final, decisive hour. Remember the agony of the cross, as God and Satan went head-to-head for the eternal possession of your soul. It was a struggle to the death, and by the end of the day, Jesus the Son of God lay dead in a tomb.

But Jesus won. He has risen! He is alive and death is dead.

Also remember that Jesus is the Christ! Christ means the anointed one. God handpicked and anointed him to be our champion. He is the Messiah. All the prophecies of Scripture are fulfilled in him. This is the only one who has God’s own approval. Why would doubts rise in our minds if our Christian faith is the right one? Jesus is the Christ. Yes, he is the one God appointed to suffer and die. But he is also the one God appointed to rise and live forever and ever. Jesus rose to ascend to the right hand of God, where he rules all things in heaven and earth. And if he has power to rule all things, he has power to save those who believe in him. Remember Jesus Christ.

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead. If there is perhaps one word that creates more doubt, more uncertainty, more fear than any other, it is the word death. We know it is part of life. We know that it is coming to friends, to family, to spouses, to me. It is said that fear usually is caused by the unknown. Death is very well known, but it still fills us with fear. Why?

The fear of death comes from the knowledge of sin. Deep down we know that there is a God who is holy, good, and just. Deep down we also know that we have failed to perfectly do what he requires: to live a holy and sinless life in perfect love for him and every other human being. And
Scripture bluntly draws the inevitable conclusion for us: We die because we have sinned. That is what fills us with fear. We were created to live in harmony with God, but our sins bring God’s wrath and judgment. Our sins separate us from God and his love, for peace and joy. They bring upon us God’s sentence of guilty of eternal death. What will we do?

**Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.** The one who came out of the tomb has paid for all your sins. He carried them to the cross and then left them in the tomb. Your sins are gone! They are dead and buried! Out of the tomb came a holy Lord Jesus Christ. On the cross he was covered with our sins and suffered death. But now he is alive - the proof that God has accepted his sacrifice.

Jesus' resurrection is the very foundation of our faith. That is what we celebrate today. His resurrection gives us certainty about our forgiveness and all the promises God has made. Look what God has done for you! You can trust him with your life and with your soul! and seeing Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, creates unshakable faith and hope that is ours no matter what may happen in our earthly lives. Yes, **Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!**

I have always wondered what the cynics and nonbelievers do at Easter while the Christian church joyfully celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Humanism may be a somewhat believable theory for them in the classroom, a theory that warms the heart with thoughts of human goodness and potential. But what about at a cold graveside, where everything seems so final, so meaningless? It is precisely at that point that our Christian faith holds on to the promise of Jesus: **I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.**

That is your faith, your hope, and your joy too. And so that you may always have faith, hope, and joy - even on the darkest of days in this world - remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead.

Finally, **Remember Jesus Christ - descended from David.** He comes from a king. He is a king. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Heaven is his throne and earth is his footstool. He commands and rules all things by his powerful Word.

And this King with all power protects you. In this same letter to Timothy, Paul wrote: **The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.**

But there is another reason we rejoice this morning that Jesus Christ is descended from David. David was a king, but David was also a man. So is our Lord Jesus Christ. It was not just the Son of God who came out of the tomb on Easter morning but also the Son of Man. It was a human being, like us, who rose from the dead. By his resurrection we are given a glimpse of the glory that will one day be ours when Christ calls us out of our graves to everlasting glory. We will be perfect – no weakness or decline. The hurts, the pains, the handicaps, the illnesses, the diseases, the death – all gone. No shattered dreams and disappointments, no failures and shortcomings, no sadness and grief.

Rather, **We will all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet,** as Paul wrote to the Corinthians. Jesus Christ, who by his resurrection shows that he has power over death, will raise from death all people and glorify the bodies of those who trust in him. Look at the human body of David’s Descendant when he came out of the tomb. We will be like him, and what Job confessed we also believe: **After my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes – I, and not another. how my heart yearns within me!**

And of all this, Paul says: **This is my gospel,** that is, the **good news.** But this is not just Paul’s gospel or my gospel or your gospel - as if these were some privately held religious opinions. No! It is the eternal gospel of Jesus Christ. It is God’s own message of peace and hope to the world. He is the one who has spoken these things, and because God himself said it, it is true! Your faith in him is secure and solid. For this gospel is rock and not shifting sand.

So remember this gospel always, my friends, for by it, you are saved. Remember always what God’s done for you. Yes, **Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David.** Amen.

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