

7 Ways of Resistance for Lent
Week Seven: Resurrection
Matthew 28:1-10

For fear of the angel, the guards shook and became like dead men.

But the first words out of his mouth are “Don’t be afraid.”

The first words of the angel to Mary. The first words of the angel to the women, and even the soldiers.

They are also among the first words of Jesus in the resurrection: “Don’t be afraid.”

Because he is not here; he has risen!

Resurrection literally means “to stand up.” To get up. The leaders tried and failed. The military police tried and failed. The conspirators tried and failed. They went to the most extreme measure: getting one of his own to betray him, put him on trial with an angry mob outside, and have him crucified. Dead.

You’re not supposed to get up when you’re dead.

A movement is not supposed to rise up when the leader is dead. When the movement is dead. When the last breath is gone. It’s not supposed to continue.

But what you’re looking for is not here; he has risen!

We reject the ways of empire and domination. We will live into the reign of God, a kingdom without kings, but one who laid down his life for us.

We reform our thinking to be born into God’s ways and reject the ways of worldly success and notoriety in the world.

We understand redemption to be God’s radical welcome to us and we extend that same radical grace and hospitality to others, especially to those of different ethnic groups and religious backgrounds.

We resolve to change our old assumptions and prejudices about others and will check our privilege and work to change our ways.

We join the revolution of love and hope that is greater than all fear, and not allow fear to rule in our hearts and minds.

We are helping to reveal Christ to the world—not the Christ of empire, the Christ of rules, the Christ of cliques who keep people inside and out—but the Christ who gave his life for us, who showed us the way of love and justice.

We rise up. We are joining in the movement. We will resist empire, because Christ has Risen! Christ has Risen Indeed! Death does not have a hold on us. Fear cannot stop us. Hate will not have the last word. Faith, Hope, and Love—this is what will rise.

Resurrection. Rise Up.

Worship Ideas for Resurrection

- Decorate a cross with flowers, or arrange flowers in the shape of a cross on the table.
- Decorate boxes in gold paper with the lids open or off.
- Find children's "pop-up" books and have them open on the table.
- Decorate the table with protest posters that say, "Love Wins" or "Rise Up."

Mission Ideas for Resurrection

- Bring flowers to a senior citizen home and visit the residents this week.
- Plan a community garden for the spring. Think about what vegetables and fruits can be planted and how to share the bounty with those in need in your community.
- Distribute seeds for fruits and vegetables along with potting soil and pots to neighbors and friends to grow their own deck gardens.

Liturgy (from Matthew 28:1-10)

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid,"

For we are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

"He is not here,"

For he has risen, just as he said!

"Come, see the place where he lay."

The tomb is found empty, for Christ is Risen!

Come, join in worship, for he has been raised from the dead.

Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed!

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

Almighty God, we confess that sometimes we haven't even looked in the tomb. We have expected the worst and assumed that nothing will change. Pull us away from our assumptions and our fears, and help us to live into the Good News that death does not have a hold on us. This world cannot dictate our life's direction, for Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed! Call us out of our fear to look, to know, and to proclaim Christ's resurrection until he comes again. Amen!

Blessing/Assurance

Now is the time to rise up. Now is the time to go forth. Now is the time to spread the news that God's love is greater than anything we have known. You are loved and forgiven and our only call us to love and forgive. Go, share the Good News, rise up, and join the movement. Amen.

Prayer

Greatest Love, we come to You astonished to find Your love is far greater than we imagined. We are enveloped in something far beyond what we can understand. We are called into this love with our siblings in the faith, to share the Good News to all Your children. On this Easter Sunday, as we rejoice and celebrate and know that life is eternal, may we hold on to this feeling all year long. May we see new life all around us, embrace it, and grow in Your love. Amen.