

FACING FRAILTY AND FATALITY

Introduction

As infection counts and death tolls rise, as warnings about self-isolating and social-distancing abound, it's reasonable—even likely—that our thoughts turn often to our own frailty and the inevitability of dying. Is there hope in the face of these? When we look to Jesus, we see not just hope, but death-defying certainty!

Devotion

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" (John 20:1,2)

Mary was afraid. Her Jesus was dead. Not only had she lost a dear friend but also all hope for salvation. All she could do was to make sure that his body, so hurriedly buried in Joseph's tomb, was properly preserved.

So she went early that first Easter with her embalming spices. From a distance she noticed that the stone had been rolled away. Tearfully, fearfully, she rushed back to Jerusalem to give Peter and John the terrible news: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

"Mary," we feel like shouting, "you looked at the empty grave but didn't 'see' its message. Instead of seeing a Lord raised by God's love and rejoicing in the eternal life he offers, you in your fear saw only death."

Can we blame her? As sinful human beings, we're so afraid of death that we don't even like to think about it. We don't even like to use the word. People don't die—they pass away. We don't even like to look at death. We mask it behind makeup and bouquets of flowers and comfortable-looking caskets.

Let's not repeat Mary's mistake. She ran away from the empty Easter tomb. We want to run to it. Desperately, daily, we need the answers that tomb shouts out to us: "He is not here! He is risen! He's alive, gloriously so."

But look and listen more to that Easter tomb. It speaks to us not only about our Jesus but also about ourselves. "Death is defeated!" it shouts out to us. There are two doors to our graves—one marked "entrance" by sin's wage and the other marked "exit" by the Savior's resurrection.

To beloved believers whom we lay in the grave we say not "good-bye" but "see you again." And when our day comes, that empty Easter tomb reinforces the Savior's promise: "Because I live, you also will live" (John 14:19).

Of all the questions we face, none is greater than those about life and death. From Easter comes the answer we need for our fear of death.

—from [Easter Triumph, Easter Joy: Devotions for the Easter Season](#)

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the Good Shepherd of your Father's flock. By your grace I have a place among your sheep and lambs. Guide me today into the green pastures of your Word, refresh my weary soul, and lead me in the path that is right for me. Help me face life and death without fear, knowing that you have given me eternal life as a gift and you will not let anyone snatch me out of your strong hands. Amen.

—from [A Year of Prayer](#)

Hymn-Sing

I Know that My Redeemer Lives (CW 152)

[PDF](#), [Organ accompaniment](#), [Piano accompaniment](#)

Piano players: looking for some [new Easter music to play](#) while staying at home?

Children's Activities

Learn about [Jesus' death and resurrection](#).

Go deeper and have some fun with these [related activities](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Face life's difficult moments with these additional resources:

Devotionals: [More Precious than Gold](#), [Meditations Daily Devotional](#) (subscription)

Prayer books: [There's a Prayer for That](#), [A Simple Way to Pray](#)

Books: [Purposeful Grieving](#), [God's Children Never Die](#)

Music albums: [Hymns with Friends](#), [Gesangbuch](#), [Hope of All](#), [In Three Days](#)

Monthly magazine: [Forward in Christ](#) (preview the April 2020 edition for [FREE](#))