

Matthew 28:1-10

Listen, What do you Hear. Remember last week I asked you to listen to what the crowd was saying. You could hear them shouting "Hosanna To The Son of David." Or "Jesus". But by Friday they were shouting Crucify Him, Crucify Him. Give us Barabas. What an amazing difference. But now Listen.

Listen; it is Easter!! 'What do you hear? Listen to the sounds of spring, what do you hear? **Listen to the sounds of the organ, the music, the piano, what do you hear? Listen, God's voice is speaking to you this morning, what do you hear? Listen, what do you hear this morning, this Easter morning?**

Listen: I hear terrible Captain Sepulcher and his standard bearer Corruption talking over the situation on the night that Jesus Christ was buried.

Listen: Corruption says to Sepulcher," Hold fast to that Man in Joseph's tomb. There is a rumor that He proposes to break forth, break out from the grave; do not let Him go until I can securely lay a hold of Him. But Corruption fails to touch Him during all those hours in the tomb.

Listen: Hell cries out, "Hold fast to that Man. Hold Him, if he comes out He will make a hole in the walls of death through which all prisoners of Hell will escape. Hold him Captain Sepulcher, if you let this man go, you are not Satan's friend.

Listen: I hear the seal break, I hear the watch of death slip away ! I hear the grip of death breaking it's hold. I hear the door of the tomb open.

Listen: I hear terrible Captain Sepulcher try to tighten his grip upon this man , but he cries out in vain, "I cannot hold him, I cannot hold him. "

Listen: I hear a rustling, a moving,

I hear the sounds of new life,

I hear the sounds of death moved aside for the eternal sounds of life, wholeness.

I hear the sounds of the Easter Resurrection, I hear, I see, I am convinced that Jesus is alive !!

JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN.....HE IS RISEN INDEED!!

Yes, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus on this Easter Sunday. The great earthquake that moved that stone and revealed to all the empty tomb where only the clothes of Jesus lay.

A great sound of death loosing its grip on Jesus is heard this day. Death has lost its sting, death has been swallowed up in victory. We who believe can fear death no more.

What does Easter mean? It means as The German theologian Jurgen Moltmann expresses in a single sentence the great span from Good Friday to Easter. It is, in fact, a summary of human history, past, present, and future: **"God weeps with us so that we may someday laugh with him."**

Jesus wept on the cross, cried out in anguish to the Father, and now on Easter he laughs, he laughs because everything is changed. Life is changed. We have hope. We have the promise of the resurrection.

There is joy in living because no matter how difficult things can be, we know at the end there will be a joy, a laughter, a celebration of new life.

There is a story about **Brer Rabbit** as told. **In this story Brer Fox and Brer Bear have Brer Rabbit caught in a very serious predicament.** They have him tied up and ready to roast for their supper. As they place Brer Rabbit over the fire, . . . he begins to laugh.

This arouses the anger of Brer Fox, . . . who tries to impress on him the seriousness of the situation. Brer Rabbit continues to laugh. **He explains that he is thinking of his laughing place.**

Brer Bear's curiosity begins to get the best of him. He must see this laughing place. **Finally getting Brer Fox to go along with it, . . . they cut Brer Rabbit loose . . . to show them his laughing place.**

Brer Rabbit leads them through the forest, . . . anxiously looking for an appropriate place, . . . **since he did not actually have a laughing place.** Then he spots a hornet's nest in some dense brush. He points to the brush saying, . . . This is my laughin place!

In good cartoon fashion, . . . Brer Bear rushes in . . . getting the hornet's nest caught over his head. While Brer Fox and Brer Bear are attacked by the hornets, . . . Brer Rabbit runs free.

Later, . . . Brer Bear catches Brer Rabbit again . . . and says, . . . If this is the laughin place, . . . I ain't laughin !

Brer Rabbit replies, . . . ***I didn't say it was your laughin place, . . I said it was my laughin place!***

At this point the hornets catch up once again to Brer Bear and Brer Fox, . . . provoking them once again to release Brer Rabbit as the hornets chase them into the sunset.

When the trials of life get us down, when we begin to lose hope, we can go to our laughin' place, the spot in our mind's eye where we visualize the resurrection. Where we can turn and laugh at all the circumstances of life and say, I can handle it, because I know of a great place that I am privileged to go.

One detail in the Easter stories has always intrigued me: **Why did Jesus keep the scars from his crucifixion? Presumably he could have had any resurrected body he wanted, and yet he chose one identifiable mainly by scars that could be seen and touched. Why?**

I believe the story of Easter would be incomplete without those scars on the hands, the feet, and the side of Jesus. When human beings fantasize, we dream of pearly straight teeth and wrinkle-free skin and sexy ideal shapes. We dream of an unnatural state: the perfect body.

But for Jesus, being confined in a skeleton and human skin was the unnatural state. The scars are, to him, an emblem of life on our planet, a permanent reminder of those days of confinement and suffering.

I take hope in Jesus' scars. From the perspective of heaven, they represent the most horrible event that has ever happened in the history of the universe. Even that event, though, Easter turned into a memory.

Because of Easter, I can hope that the tears we shed, the blows we receive, the emotional pain, the heartache over lost friends and loved ones, all these will become memories, like Jesus' scars.

Scars never completely go away, but neither do they hurt any longer. We will have re-created bodies, a re-created heaven and earth. We will have a new start, an Easter start. 1

The scars on Jesus' hands and feet remind us of the brokenness of this life, the incompleteness of this life, it is a reminder to us that one day all of our scars will be taken away in a new life, a heavenly life, a resurrected life.

A closing poem sums of the Easter story this way:

Long, long ago in a land far away,... There came the dawn of the first Easter Day,...
And each year we see that promise reborn... That God gave the world on the first Easter Morn....
For in each waking flower and each singing bird,... The Promise of Easter is witnessed and heard,...
And Spring is God's way of speaking to us..... And renewing the promise of Easter again,
For death is a season that we must pass through... And, just like the flowers, God wakens us, too...
.So why should we grieve when our loved ones die,... For we'll meet them again in a "cloudless sky"...
For Easter is more than beautiful story,... It's the promise of life and Eternal Glory."
JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN HE IS RISEN INDEED!! AMEN