

Sermon Title: **With Fear and Great Joy**

Bible: **Matthew 28:1-10**

Where & When: Easter Sunday at Gilroy UMC on April 12, 2020

Audience: about 28 YouTube Live-streaming viewers

### **Opening Prayer**

Almighty God, we see the empty tomb. Jesus is not there. He has been raised from the dead. He is the resurrection and the life. Please lead us to follow Him. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **1. Easter Egg Hunt**

Today is Easter Sunday. Last Easter Sunday, two children attended, and we provided a small spontaneous Easter egg hunt. How about today? Is there anyone who wants to do an Easter egg hunt? At this time, we cannot do a traditional Easter egg hunt. Some churches are doing a VR (Virtual Reality) Easter egg hunt. The church originally planned to have an Easter egg hunt, because we want to show our love and care for children. And we hoped to have some children at Easter Sunday Worship. We wanted to love God's children, as God loves us. Easter egg hunt, or VR egg hunt, Vacation Bible School, a Children's Message, and Sunday school are the tools of God's love and grace. God's love and grace is not virtual, but it is a reality.

### **2. Imagination and Experience**

Our imagination has infinite possibilities, but sometimes it cannot reflect ourselves or our own experiences. Let me share a couple of examples. I have a friend who had bad eyesight. He wore

very thick glasses. One day, he decided to have lasik surgery. The surgery went well. Now he was able to live without glasses. And I wondered what was better after the lasik surgery. If you were him, what do you think would be the benefit after lasik surgery? Any guesses or experiences? Actually, I asked him, and his answer was not what I expected. His answer was that he was able to see the ceiling from the bed. As you know, if you wear glasses, you need to live with them all day long. In daytime, there is no big difference. But before going to bed, he enjoyed his better eyesight while seeing the ceiling. This might be very small, but it was his very genuine experience.

Let me give you another experience that broke my imagination. I learned from this church about the Shriners Hospitals in the USA. But in Korea, I have not heard of them yet. Here is the story of a child and a mother that I heard in Korea, with a hospital helping in a similar way as the Shriners Hospitals. The child had not been able to walk, because he did not have legs and feet. After the surgery, the child had legs and feet. The child needed to practice walking for the first time. The mom helped the child. I thought that the mom would shed tears of joy, or she would try to hold or hug the child with joy or gratitude. However, what she did was to step away from the child. What she really wanted to see was the child take one step on her own. Her authentic response was not what I expected.

### **3. With Fear and Great Joy**

Jesus Christ has died on the cross. And He is risen. He conquered death. It is great and joyful news! However, the two Marys' first response was fear. In our scripture reading, the first thing

that the angel said to the women was “Do not be afraid.” Even Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid.” If you were these women, what would make you feel afraid? What is the women’s fear? Have you met Jesus before? When or what was your encounter with Jesus? In my experience, it could be fear, because we are just human beings. God’s moment, God’s miracle, God’s mystery, and God’s presence cannot come from us. We cannot make God. God reveals who God is. This comes from above. Then, our natural response could be fear. However, there is love and grace. This brings peace and joy. The Almighty God cares for us. Jesus who conquered death loves us. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the first witnesses of the resurrection, ran to the disciples with fear and great joy. So, both fear and great joy could be our genuine response to God’s resurrection and presence.

Likewise, God’s grace is free. This gives us joy and peace. God loves us as we are. We do not need to do anything to earn it. God already and still loves us. However, God’s grace is not cheap. This might make us afraid. Free does not mean that we can treat it as nothing. I hope for us to accept God’s grace with faith and with gratitude. God’s love and grace is very precious and powerful.

#### **4. Go to Galilee**

The resurrection is not only for Jesus, but also for us. Jesus’ resurrection is our victory as well. God’s power, grace, and love is overflowing. After the resurrection, Jesus went to Galilee. And the disciples went to Galilee, too. There was a great commission, which is our mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The two Marys were waiting for Jesus' resurrection. Likewise, we need to wait for a green light to go out freely. Until then, please stay healthy in spirit and body. Let us accept God's grace with faith and gratitude. Let us taste God's love more and more. Let us have God's love and grace in our minds, hearts, and our bodies. When there is the green light, we will run to the world with fear and great joy.

### **Closing Prayer**

Almighty God, thank you so much for your love! Thank you so much for Jesus' resurrection. We are joyful in the face of your love and resurrection. Please guide us to accept your love and power. We are your disciples. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Questions.**

1. Have you met Jesus? When? What does meeting Jesus look like?
2. In your encounter with Jesus, what feelings do you have? Fear? Joy?