

# ***EASTER COMES TO A GOOD FRIDAY WORLD***

**Nine Sermons for Easter**



Picture of a tomb in a Jerusalem garden

*By Bass Mitchell*

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Excerpt from  
***Easter Wings***  
John 20:1-18

A young business owner was opening a new branch office, and a friend decided to send a floral arrangement for the grand opening.

When the friend arrived at the opening, he was appalled to find that his wreath bore the inscription: "Rest in peace."

Angry, he complained to the florist. After apologizing, the florist said, "Look at it this way—somewhere a man was buried under a wreath today that said, 'Good luck in your new location.'"

You know, I'm not so sure that was a mistake. In fact, it was quite appropriate. For we are an Easter people. Easter has changed everything. Even what we thought could never be changed - death - has been changed for all time.

The sting of death is not fatal!

The grave is not the victor!

For Easter has come. He is risen!

I first began to understand what Easter means after my grandfather died. I was pretty close to him. I remember visiting him in the hospital and seeing him slowly slip away from us. It was in the spring. Soon after he died, we had an Easter sunrise service down by the river, the river where he had spent so much of his life as he made his living at least partly by setting fishnets. As the sun rose, glistening on the water, the birds began to sing - greeting it, and I heard as if for the first time the Gospel reading about the first Easter. Suddenly, it took on a whole new meaning for me. Somehow I knew that my grandfather was not gone but was with God. I cannot explain this or how I knew this. I only know I was as absolutely certain of it. I felt this tremendous peace inside. In the midst of my grief, a tremendous joy came...

Excerpt from  
***Rolling Way Stones***  
Matthew 28:1-10

"...an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it..."  
(Matthew 28:2b)

Mark 16:4 adds that the stone "...was very great."

I love that little detail from this wonderful story.

A massive stone had been rolled in front of the tomb to keep out thieves, animals or disciples

who might steal the body. But when the women arrive at the tomb that first Easter, it had been rolled away by an angel who then sat on it!

It kind of reminds me of my little brother when I was growing up - I could just shove him over and sit on him (Can't now, for he's bigger than me!)

The stone is a symbol of all that which would block our paths, keep us from going where we want and feel called to be.

The message to you this morning is that Easter has always rolled away large stones...

...unblocked entrances...

...opened up paths to new and marvelous things...

Easter rolls away stones we never thought could be budged!

What good news this should be! For blocked entrances are some the greatest problems we face in life. All kinds of obstacles, like great stones, stand between us and where we want and need to be.

### **The Stone of Weakness**

Easter rolls away the stone of weakness.

On Palm Sunday, the disciples must have been so happy, so full of hope. They had entered Jerusalem with Jesus to the shouts of "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" But how different the mood now. Like frightened children they had fled the streets of Jerusalem, locking themselves behind strong doors. What a defeated, weak bunch they were!

They needed and wanted to enter upon strength, but the way was blocked by the stone of weakness - and it was very great.

But then they looked up and to their surprise the stone of weakness had been rolled away! Easter had come! And they walked through into power. They came to know the presence and the power of the Risen Lord! And soon they were back on the very streets they had fled proclaiming the Gospel with courage and in power!

Easter had released a great power. The Risen Lord said to them:

*All POWER is given unto me in heaven and earth...So go ye therefore, and make disciples in all nations....and, lo, I am with you always... (Matthew 28:18-20).*

Paul too had discovered the power of the Risen Lord. he wrote, "That I might know him and the

POWER of his resurrection..." (Philippians 3:10).

Perhaps this Easter finds some of us feeling trapped behind a stone of weakness. Some work, some task before us seems so great, so enormous that we feel weak and inadequate. We would enter into strength but the stone of weakness blocks the path - and it is very great!

But look up!...