

Easter Day
Text: John 20:1-18
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O Death where is thy victory! Though you seem to hold my loved ones, though you have even threatened me and will no doubt one day drag me down below the cover of the earth, still, O Death, the jig is up. Your secret is hidden no longer. The news of what the lass from Magdala saw is out: you are not the final word. There is another Word who is after you because he IS before you. There was one you could not hold in the grave. Ah, yes, the wages of sin is you, O Death, and the sin of the whole world was laid upon Him. So you can't claim it wasn't fair: you had more of a claim on him than on any other who ever lived. He was made to be sin itself and so you claimed him by nail and whip and cross. But behold, O Death, he is not dead. He took with him all that sin and you with it down to the grave; but no grave, no power, not even you, O Death, could hold him who is life. The ransom has been paid. The sacrifice has been offered. The propitiation is complete. There is now no condemnation for those who are in him. It is finished.

Oh, yes. You'll have your day – you may still scheme and scare, rattling your chains like a ridiculous ghost out of Dickens. But no one is fooled. He who is up from the grave again, now calls our little death Sleep because he died the big Death. For God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He is the God of the Living not the dead. So Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not dead, but sleep; so also my loved ones sleep, they

rest with Christ. For in their Baptism's they were united to the Death and Resurrection of Christ. They were buried with him and raised with him. They are in Him. What he has done on Easter morning, he will do for them. Their very bodies, which I helped but in the ground, will rise. For His own risen body and blood were placed in their mouths and I too shall feast this day on the Bread which came down from heaven, the true, real, risen body and blood of Christ. And so I am filled with his Resurrected life; as for you, O

DEATH be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not so, For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow, Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill me. From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee, 5 Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow, And soonest our best men with thee doe goe, Rest of their bones, and soules deliverie. Thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and desperate men, And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell, 10 And poppie, or charmes can make us sleepe as well, And better then thy stroake; why swell'st thou then; One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally, And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Now the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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