

Matthew 28:1-10  
this reframes everything  
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There are moments that reframe everything. Like the time you saw the full moon, a stunning orange ball rising over the ocean, casting its gentle light upon the dark sea. You actually gasped and noticed your heart beating differently. After that you never see the world in the same frame (unless, of course, you forget what makes your heart skip.)

The moment a child comes forth is one of those times. Astonishingly tiny, squinting and all scrunched up. Every baby is beautiful even in scrunchiness, because childbirth reframes everything. Unless, of course, you forget the astonishment that brought you to tears of wonderment.

When all your denials finally crumble and you let go, taking the first step into sobriety, the rest of your life is reframed by recovery. Unless of course you forget what has reframed your life and descend again into the misery of denial.

There are many other reframing moments that you can name.

For Christians, we believe Baptism is the event that proclaims who we are and to whom we belong. Marked and sealed by the Spirit, our purpose, as Christians, is forever reframed by that marking. Unless of course we forget who we are and to whom we belong.

You don't know what will reframe your life. How can you? It just happens and you know that things will not be the same - at least until you forget and carry on. *It's the forgetting that robs your life of astonishment and wonder.*

Reframing is what happened on that first Easter morning. The two women at dawn are walking their mournful path to tend to the body of Jesus. Only Jesus is not there. He has been raised from the dead! Lightning, earthquake: Matthew with poetic flair wants us to know even the earth spasms at the moment. You could say in the most literal sense - all hell breaks loose - because that is what happens when the resurrection of Jesus occurs. ***Hell itself gasps as its terrible power is assaulted by the power of God.***

Mary and Mary know that the resurrection reframes everything. Life will never be the same because life is not longer enslaved by the finality of death. They are filled with **fear** and **joy**, the very feelings that make life exhilarating for you and me. Living with fear and joy puts you right on the edge where you know your life is dependent upon God and God's power in you. All the women want to do is share the news. Lest we forget, as we have so often done, let me say again. The church is born from the witness of women filled with fear and joy. When the church forgets the witness of women who boldly tell the good news, it always stumbles into the dark ways of hubris. So let us not forget these women who are filled with fear and joy.

My friend Jeff Krehbiel, whom I've mentioned, called me from his hospital room early in the morning. I was not expecting a call. After my cheery "hello, how ya doing?" Jeff said, "I have stage 4 metastatic pancreatic cancer" and before his breath and mine ran out, he went on, "it has spread to my liver."

Then our breath did run out, completely into silence. We talked a bit more but not much. He asked me to notify our closest friends. I did and one of them was in a church meeting when I called him. He texted back: *"this reframes everything."* What did he mean, other than everything would now be seen in light of this astringent agent called cancer. The unspoken word when you hear the word cancer is death. Death is the clarifying agent that reframes everything. *Until of course we forget our mortality and fritter away of our lives.*

But if death reframes everything in its brutal power to annihilate life, Easter is the great reframing of all things even death itself. That is the Christian faith that the women share so boldly.

Jeff declared it boldly too; telling his family and friends "I'm not afraid of death, though I'm sad. I'm actually floating in the buoyancy of God's love." That is the power of the resurrection alive in an ordinary human being.

Still, I must say, Saint Paul seems filled with the trash-talking flourish of a winner when he screams defiantly: Death, O Death, where is thy sting?

In my experience, death stings terribly, and no amount of Hallmark sentimentality takes away the pain. Again, in the most literal sense it hurts like hell, because that's what it is. Death happens; there is no escaping it. No tiny bit of immortality floats heavenward like a ghost blissfully untouched.

***But death is not the last word.*** Eternal life is. ***This is the message that lives at the heart of Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the emphatic promise that God has the last word and that word is life eternal, like an ever-flowing stream. The invitation is to live in that stream everyday and not forget it.***

Our funeral service is called **A Witness to the Resurrection**. The service concludes with this bold reframing: all of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Say it with me: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.