

EASTER, YEAR A, APRIL 5, 2026

Five simple words that changed the world. Five simple words that were spoken by Mary Magdalene. Those five words proclaimed a reality that overturned everything. And what are those words that Mary uttered? “I have seen the Lord!”

Really? They appear to be pretty innocuous and safe. But in truth, those words are not safe or sentimental. They are disruptive. It is we, over the centuries, that have turned them into something tame and have reduced them to Easter morning pleasantries wrapped in lilies and music. But these five words are a threat and a protest. Most of all they are a prophetic interruption into a world that has made peace with death.

When Mary arrived at the tomb she was burdened with her grief. She was preparing for a burial as she went to the tomb carrying spices, not hope. She went expecting silence, not a voice. Most of all, she came prepared for an ending not a beginning.

And, if we are honest, that is where we live. We understand the geography of tombs because we stand in places where hope has been buried under disappointment; where relationships have collapsed under the weight of betrayal. We see injustice that has hardened into systems we are told we cannot change. Fear has become the air we breathe and many of us have learned to expect less. In other words we have learned to call resignation “realism.” We have learned to accept death, not just physical death, but spiritual death, moral death, communal death as inevitable.

And into that resignation comes a voice. “Mary.” When the risen Jesus calls her name, everything cracks open because resurrection is not a doctrine. It is recognition. It is the moment when what we thought was finished calls us back into life. It is the moment when God refuses to stay where we buried God.

So when Mary says, “I have seen the Lord,” she is not reporting an event. She is defying a system. She is declaring that death does not get the last word. She is announcing that despair has lost its authority. She is exposing every power that depends on fear as already defeated.

That is why resurrection is dangerous. Because if death is not the ultimate end, then neither is anything that feeds on death: not oppression, violence, injustice, or the quiet despair we normalize. And here’s the really interesting aspect of resurrection. It does not politely request permission to come into your life. It just invades.

And here is where the gospel stops being comfortable. We have turned resurrection into something that happened to Jesus. But Easter is more than a moment in history. It is demanding participation. Because the moment Mary says, “I have seen the Lord,” she is not just a witness. She becomes the first preacher of Easter and the first voice that refuses to be silent. Her words become the first crack in the empire of death.

So let me say it plainly: If you claim resurrection, you cannot live like death still runs the world. To say “I have seen the Lord” is not just to believe something. It is to become something. It means where there is despair, we become people who dare to hope. Where there is fear, we become people who act with courage. Where there is injustice, we become people who refuse to accept that things must remain as they are.

Resurrection is not an idea to admire. It is a force that rearranges us. And let’s be honest: that kind of hope is costly. Because it asks us to live as if new life is possible even when the evidence says otherwise. Guess what else? Resurrection people are

dangerous people because they live as if a new world has already begun and that kind of living will cost you. It will cost you comfort and certainty. It will cost you the illusion that staying silent keeps you safe because resurrection demands courage.

There is a story about Archbishop Desmond Tutu during the height of Apartheid in South Africa. The government cancelled a political rally to stop the opposition. Instead, Tutu held a service at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town. The cathedral was filled with worshippers and as Tutu began to preach hundreds of armed police, who had gathered as a show of force, entered the cathedral and lined the walls. They took out notebooks and recorded Tutu's words trying to intimidate him. But he would not be intimidated. He preached against the evils of apartheid declaring it could not endure. At one extraordinary point he addressed the police directly and said; "You are powerful. You are very powerful but you are not gods and I serve a God who cannot be mocked. So, since you've already lost, yes, since you've already lost, I invite you today to come and join the winning side." With that the congregation erupted in dancing and song and the police didn't know what to do as their attempts at intimidation had failed overcome by the confidence that God and goodness would triumph over evil.

That is resurrection speech. That is what it sounds like when someone has seen the Lord. It is not naïve optimism. It is defiant hope. It is the audacity to declare, in the face of overwhelming evidence, that evil does not win. And hear this clearly: Resurrection is not the resuscitation of what was. It is the transformation of what is. It is God taking what the world has declared dead and saying, "Not yet." It is the insistence that love will outlast hate, that justice will outlive oppression, that life will break through every sealed tomb. But do not romanticize it.

Because resurrection will ask things of you: It will ask you to forgive when resentment feels justified. It will ask you to love when it feels dangerous. It will ask you to tell the truth when silence would be easier. That isn't comfortable. But that is resurrection.

Mary's words are prophetic because they are incomplete. She does not say, "I understand everything." She does not say, "Everything is fixed." She simply says: "I have seen." Which means even a glimpse is enough to begin again. In many respects Mary is a midwife who helped bring this newness of resurrection to birth.

So the question is not: Do you believe in the resurrection? The question is: Where is resurrection confronting you right now? Where is it refusing to let you settle? Is it in the places you have already given up? In the relationship you have buried? In the injustice you have learned to tolerate? In the fear that has been quietly shaping your life? Because you need to remember the risen Christ is still calling names. Still stepping into locked rooms. Still disrupting the endings we have accepted.

Now maybe you are not ready to shout it yet. Maybe all you have is a whisper: "I think I've seen something." A flicker. A crack of light. A name spoken in the dark. But that's enough. Because resurrection always begins small, uninvited and unstoppable.

But hear this warning and this promise: If you truly see the Lord, you will not remain the same. Hope will rise where despair once ruled. Courage will take root where fear once lived. Life will begin again where you had already pronounced death. And sooner or later, it will cost you enough that your words will carry weight.

And when they do, you will stand not as a spectator, not as a believer alone but as a witness. You will become the midwives of new beginnings and hope who realizes we

don't put our hope in the news of despair rather we base our hope on Jesus and the resurrection so we can watch for that news to change."

Then we can say, with Mary, not safely or softly but prophetically "I have seen the Lord." Alleluia, Christ is Risen. The Lord is risen indeed. We have seen the Lord. Amen.