

Easter: The Beginning of a Faith-Filled Life (John 20:1–18)

Easter Sunday Sermon (4/5/2026)

Premkumar Immanuel Clement

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

This is more than just a greeting or tradition; it is a powerful declaration that has resonated through centuries. It holds the ability to shape, sustain, and change human lives. Today, our gathering goes beyond recalling an event; it marks the start of a life guided by faith, making Easter a new beginning.

1. Easter: Not the End, but the Beginning

When we turn to John's Gospel, chapter 20, we encounter a strange and powerful story.

It begins in darkness. Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb early, while it is still dark. The stone is rolled away. The body is gone. This is not a triumphant beginning—it is confusion, fear, and uncertainty. And yet, this moment becomes the turning point of history. For the early disciples, Easter was not the conclusion of Jesus' life. It was not the final chapter.

Easter marked the start. Early sermons in Acts clearly focus on the resurrection rather than Jesus' birth or teachings. This is because His entire story—life, teachings, death—gains meaning through Easter. Without it, the story is tragic; with it, life is renewed.

2. The Reality of Christ in Human Life

Therefore, "Easter signifies Christ's presence within human life." But what does that entail? It means Christ is not merely a historical figure. He transcends time and dwells within us. As long as we maintain faith, Christ remains with us. Just as the body's life is driven by the

soul—allowing us to move, feel, and live—faith is essential for living, making decisions, acting, and engaging with the world purposefully. Faith isn't just an abstract idea or simple belief; it is a living presence.

Faith shows itself through love and actions, so it doesn't depend solely on evidence. Jesus Himself said: "The works that the Father has given me... testify on my behalf." Similarly, our lives should testify to Christ's presence within us. Our deeds will speak for themselves, and our love will reveal Him. Living within us, He dispels fear and worries about our existence. Faith empowers us to face the future with confidence and without anxiety. This truth is echoed in the familiar song, "Because he lives, I can face tomorrow...."

3. When Christ Is Not Yet Born in Us

But we also have to face a tough truth. Let us consider "In whose life Christ has not come into being: for those he is not yet born, not yet suffered, not yet risen..."

This is not about history—it is about experience.

And therefore, Christ is not yet alive in them. This leads to what you may call the **negative forms of faith**. Because of the absence of faith in the crucified and risen Christ, their lives are numb. It is a Faith that is numb to human suffering, a Faith without compassion, a Faith without works, and a Faith that does not trust God's promises.

Such faith is not living faith. It is, as Scripture says, **dead faith**. Easter calls us to turn away from such faith. Easter gives the message to make a shift from a faith-filled life that calls for a shift from indifference → to compassion, doubt → to trust, and inactivity → to love in action. Easter calls us back to the way of living the life of Jesus.

4. The challenge and importance of maintaining faith.

Let us be honest. The resurrection is not easy to believe. We live in a world governed by the laws of nature. We know that the dead do not rise or get back their lives. So we ask, and that too, for His only son, Jesus Christ, to raise him from his death? Why would God break this pattern? Why would God do something so extraordinary? And here is where our reflection becomes deeply profound:

Faith is not built on proof alone. In fact, much of our life is built on faith. We believe:

- that those we love truly love us
- that tomorrow will come
- that our lives have meaning

We live by faith every day. But the resurrection—**this is the cornerstone of all faith.**

It is the foundation of everything else. Our identity is built on it, and it defines who we are. With Christ's resurrection, our perspective shifts. We believe that death is not the end, love surpasses fear, hope outweighs despair, and we view our lives through the lens of the risen Christ, finding ultimate meaning in this perspective. Easter becomes the beginning of a life shaped by trust in this truth.

5. Faith Precedes Understanding

In John 20, a remarkable scene unfolds. The beloved disciple approaches the tomb, peers in, but does not enter. The evidence is clear, yet he hesitates. Then Peter, known for his impulsiveness and boldness, enters without delay. Sometimes, faith requires daring rather than certainty or full understanding. It takes courage. Faith comes before understanding; it is a gift. We do not need to

fully grasp before believing. Instead, we believe first, and then understanding comes later. This is similar to loving a child: we love them before knowing all that they will become. Likewise, with faith, we take a step forward, and understanding follows.

6. Mary Magdalene: The First Witness

The most pivotal moment in the resurrection event occurs when Mary, standing outside the tomb and weeping, initially does not recognize Jesus. Everything shifts when He calls her by name: “Mary.” At that instant—everything transforms. She responds with “Rabboni!” and proclaims, “I have seen the Lord.” This marks the first Easter sermon. It contains no theological arguments, no proofs, and no explanation of how Jesus rose from the dead. It was just a testimony: **“I have seen the Lord.”** And notice what Jesus tells her: “Go to my brothers and tell them.” Faith is never meant to remain private. Faith must be shared. Mary receives a word—and she becomes a witness.

7. The Sacramental Meaning of Easter

Easter is not just an event that happened to Jesus. It is something that must happen within us. Before Easter, faith in people had been lost, but with Easter, it was renewed. This is the sacramental meaning of Easter. We had descended into fear, into sin, into brokenness. But in Christ, God descends to meet us. And as we rise toward Him, He lifts us into new life. Easter is not only about Jesus rising. It is about **us rising with Him.**

8. Why Do We Keep Coming Back?

For us, Christians, every Sunday is Easter Sunday. Why do people gather every Sunday, the day of resurrection? Why is there a special focus on Easter? Because this story touches the core of human longing. Even doubt can't erase its impact; instead, doubt often highlights the profound

nature of what we're experiencing. This message is so powerful and transformative that it calls for a response. Like the first disciples, we continually return to the empty tomb.

9. The Call: Begin a Faith-Filled Life

So what does Easter ask of us today? It asks us to begin. To begin a life: rooted in faith, expressed through love, lived with courage, and shared with others.

It asks us to move from: seeing → to believing, believing → to living, and living → to witnessing.

Conclusion

Mary Magdalene went and announced, “I have seen the Lord.” That is where it begins. Not with certainty. Not with complete understanding. But with an encounter. With faith. With a willingness to go and tell. So today, hear the message of Easter: **Christ is risen.** Now go—tell someone. And more than that—**Live it.** Because Easter is not the end of the story, **it is the beginning of a faith-filled life.**