

Today Jesus is dead. Jesus' body is in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb and there are soldiers outside the tomb guarding it. We are here, in the Upper Room, the room in which we shared a Passover meal two nights ago with Jesus, the night he told us to eat his body and drink his blood.

Yesterday Jesus was crucified, hung on a cross to die. We ran away, all but the women who came to Jerusalem with us and maybe John. Peter, who denied Jesus three times, is in the corner over there, feeling very guilty. Judas is dead by his own hand. Cleopas and another disciple are preparing to return to their home in Emmaus as soon as the Sabbath is over. Things look very bleak compared to last Sabbath, when the people of Jerusalem hailed Jesus as their Messiah. How could they have demanded his crucifixion just days later?

Yes, Jesus is dead. We had such high hopes for what he would do for our country. And yet, we know that Jesus told us he would rise again after three days. Do we dare believe this, trust this? We know that the Chief Priests and the Pharisees heard that Jesus foretold his Resurrection. They are worried that we will steal Jesus' body and hide it so that people would THINK that Jesus has been resurrected.

Even if this were something we had planned, we couldn't possibly pull such a heist off: There are now soldiers guarding the tomb. And yet, we can't help but think that having the tomb guarded is a GOOD thing. If Jesus comes back to life as he told us he would, the Temple leaders won't be able to claim we stole his body.

Yes, we ourselves heard the Master say that he would be killed and rise again after three days. He said this to us not just once, but three times. Could this possibly be true? We didn't think Jesus could walk on the water or calm a storm or heal all manner of diseases, much less raise Lazarus from HIS tomb, at least we didn't think he could do these things until we saw him do them.

So, here we are, waiting. Waiting to see what will come to pass. We wait in fear of being arrested. But mostly we wait in hope—hope for Jesus to prove those who conspired in Jesus' death to be totally wrong: wrong about him and wrong about his rising to life.

While we wait, we put our hope and trust into action: We ask Jesus-the-Christ and his Father-in-heaven to heal us. Heal us from: our doubts and fears, our unbelief, our denial of him; our failures to "take up his cross and follow him," as he told us to do. Yes, we followed Jesus to Jerusalem; now we wait in hope of his Resurrection and its promise of eternal life.



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