

Matthew 28: 1-10 Easter Day 2026 The message in chocolate...

Some people think that Easter day is all about chocolate! And who doesn't like chocolate? Well today I am adapting an idea from a clever colleague and will attempt to share the Easter story with chocolate...one bar at a time 😊

On the third day after Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, Matthew's gospel tells us that two of the Mary's (M & M's) went to see Jesus in his tomb. Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary. Most likely his good friend Mary of Bethany and not Mary his mother.

These women had been with him to the end, following him to the cross and had witnessed his death. They could not come to the tomb any earlier as it had been the sabbath day when Jews could not travel any distance or do any work, they had to take a (kit kat) break. So, it was early on the morro that they set off walking, not on a picnic, they wanted to be close to Jesus, to mourn him and anoint his body with Xtra special oils and spices.

As they walked no doubt their minds twirled with memories as they thought about recent days. Only a week ago Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem and everyone had hailed him, with much aero bubbly excitement. But then one of his disciples betrayed him, not one of his fishermen friends, but Judas, and Jesus had been arrested, and flogged with a curly whurly whip. Then they nailed him to a cross.

While Jesus was on the cross, the sky went dark like an eclipse. Then Jesus said his last words, *it is finished*, and died.

Later, Joseph and Nicodemus had come and collected Jesus body and placed it in an empty tomb like a big hollow egg. A huge stone, which rhymes with Toblerone was rolled in front, where they thought the story would end.

As Mary and Mary (M & M's) got to the tomb, there was a violent (violet crumble) earthquake. One might think that it was the earthquake that made the stone move from its secure position. But Matthew tells us that the earthquake occurred as an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, went to the tomb, and (summer roll) rolled away the stone and sat on it!

Can you picture this angel, appearance like lightning and clothes as white as snow? He was obviously very strong as he rolled the heavy stone away, and very satisfied with his work as he then sat on the stone. Job done!

There were guards at the tomb. They had been sent to ensure no tricky business would happen such as the disciples coming to steal the body and pretend Jesus had risen! They were not expecting this supernatural event, and we read that they shook and became like

dead men! This angel must have been quite a sight. While the supposed dead man, Jesus, comes alive, these men who were alive now look like the dead!

When the women arrive at the tomb, they are met by the angel who immediately comforts them from any fear they may have, with the words most angels in the bible begin their dialogue with... *“Do not be afraid.”*

The angel continues to assure the women, *“I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”*

This angel is God’s messenger, God knew the women would be the first ones at the tomb, the women who had been loyal to Jesus. The women who would be the first to believe the resurrection.

The angel invites the women to *‘Come and see’, ‘Come and see the place where he lay’*.”

The stone had not been rolled away to let Jesus *out*, that had already supernaturally happened, the stone was rolled away to let the women *in* so they could bear witness to the empty tomb.

Imagine the women who had come to see Jesus, they believed to be dead, now enter the tomb and to their huge (**kinder surprise**) discover it was empty. Just like this **egg**. They had seen his crucified body taken off the cross and had seen where the body had been laid. Now there is no body. Other accounts mention the folded grave clothes where Jesus had lay. You can just imagine Jesus arising and neatly folding the cloths before he miraculously left the tomb. Cloths that were evidence that he had been there but was no longer.

The angel tells them the obvious, that Jesus is *‘not here’*, maybe the Mary’s were looking around to see if there was anywhere Jesus could have been hiding! But the angel continues with the amazing news, that Jesus *has risen, just as he said*.

These women were Jesus disciples, they had been journeying with Jesus along with the male disciples, the **fishermen** and other **friends**. They would have heard Jesus tell them that he was going to suffer and die but that on the third day he would rise again. They all seem to have forgotten this in their despair as they watched their beloved teacher and friend crucified.

But now these women are reminded of this fantastic, good news.

After being invited to *come and see*, the angel now tells the women to *go and tell*.

Go and tell the disciples what I have told you, and that they are to go to Galilee where they will see Jesus.

The women believe, the women are obedient, the women are still in awe and afraid, yet at the same time filled with (kinder joy) as they run to tell the disciples.

We don't know how far they get before they are stopped in their tracks.

Suddenly Jesus met them.

Wow! What a morning this has turned out to be for these two women who went to anoint a dead body. Instead, they have met an angel, been shown an empty tomb and now they are greeted by Jesus himself. What a (Turkish delight) delight for Mary and Martha M & M's.

Can you imagine it?! What an emotional rollercoaster that would have been. From intense grief and sadness to overwhelming, unbelievable joy!

The angel had told them that would see Jesus with the other disciples in Galilee. But these women are so blessed, they don't have to wait that long. They see Jesus on the morning of his resurrection. What a boost to their faith.

Naturally they fall at his feet to worship him. The only fitting thing to do.

I hope you've come to meet and worship the risen Jesus this morning, to be surprised and delighted at the Easter message again. Maybe in your heart you can bow before him and tell him how much you love and adore him just like the two Mary's.

Not only are we called to come and see, but Jesus comes to meet and greet us.

He echoes the angels' words. *Do not be afraid.*

Jesus reiterates the angels command to tell the male disciples to go to Galilee where they will see him. He uses the endearing term of *brothers*. These men who had deserted him and denied him will be forgiven and reunited with Jesus and commissioned to go and tell the world the good news. The good news that Jesus died and rose again to be a life saver for all who believe in him.

But the women are the first to go and tell the amazing, good news. Now, not only can they say they saw an angel and an empty tomb. Now they can share that they have seen the risen Lord!

If they were running before, just think how fast they would be going now to see the disciples. Rejoicing, laughing, crying shaking their heads, wondering to each other if what they just saw was real, or was it all a dream – pinching themselves, knowing in their hearts that it was real, that Jesus had risen, just as he said he would! Perhaps they are remembering the conversations Jesus had with them all telling them that he would die and rise again. Perhaps they now chide themselves for forgetting and not having faith.

But all that doesn't matter now because they have seen him. In meeting Jesus, the women have been transformed.

Can you see them arriving where the disciples are huddled and forlorn, bursting in, puffing and both yelling out, *We've seen the Lord! He has risen!! You've got to go to Galilee and then you will see him too!*'

The simple good news we celebrate this morning is that Jesus rose from the dead. He defeated sin once for all on the cross so that we might be forgiven, and he defeated death and he lives so that we might live forever.

If you haven't met Jesus before then come and meet him. Ask him into your life, he is waiting to greet you. If you do know Jesus already, then ask him to fill you more and more that you may have a deeper and even more joyous relationship with him. He longs to fill and bless you.

He offers new life, transformed life, as we heard from Liam and James who were baptised into new life this morning. The time is (cherry) ripe for us to go, for God to bring in new believers to his family.

As you are filled with wonder and joy, go, and tell your brothers and sisters, your neighbours and friends and invite them to come and meet the risen Lord too. Remind them that the empty chocolate eggs we have at Easter represent the empty tomb, and that real eggs, like this one, represent new life (I don't have a new born chick to show you 😊), life that Jesus longs to fill us with.

Let's pray:

Living Lord Jesus, may we be surprised and delighted by you afresh this morning. We thank you for your death and resurrection, for being our life saver for all eternity. We pray for more people to come to know you. Help us, like the two Mary's, to go and tell the world the good news of Easter.

Christ is risen: He is risen indeed. Hallelujah!