

It takes only a few moments for us to reflect on our lives and realize how true this is. Little things could have kept us from doing things differently. They may have enabled us to meet our future spouse, or closest friend. Little things may have opened up a job opportunity that would have never been available to us. Having my stroke could have been worse. Going to an 80th birthday party and then getting a phone call from Lillian. And you know the rest of the story. Little things make a difference.

If little things make a difference in our lives, imagine the impact and significance of the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus on us. Even though this is an event distant from us in time and space, still it has the ability to transform our lives just as it did the lives of the women and disciples.

The women came to the tomb planning to grieve. They were going to express their grief in handling Jesus' body and better preparing it for burial. Because of time constraints on Friday, they were not able to do it properly.

In the middle of their grief, the women encountered the empty tomb. They heard the angel tell them they didn't need to be afraid. "Jesus had been raised from the dead," they were told. He was no longer in the tomb.

This discovery changed the plans of the women and their lives. Their grief was ended. The embalming spices would be used on someone else. They were given a mission—to tell the disciples. Their lives would be forever different.

At the end of the gospel of Mark, the women have not yet fully understood what had happened or what was going to happen. We are left with a cliff hanger, but we who live in this age, know not only did the resurrection of Jesus change the lives of the women and disciples, it changed the world in which we live. The women and disciples, however, had to live out each day learning the difference the empty tomb and resurrection of Jesus had on their lives.

We are tempted to get caught up in life and to make our own plans, to set our own goals, and to seek to do our own thing. The empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus break into our lives, as it did the women, and change our plans.

There are times when life changes our plans for us. We lose a job, have the opportunity to move, are challenged by some changes in our health, or experience the death of someone close to us. All of these force us to change our plans. In the middle of these forced changes, the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are present to give us hope and strengthen to face the changes and deal with them in a positive manner.

The presence of the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus Christ enable us to state with certainty that “All things work together for the good, for those who are called.”

Usually we do not like to change our plans, but the change in plans instituted by the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus Christ bring with them good news.

Like the women at the end of the gospel of Mark, we go forward with changed plans but not really knowing what lies ahead.

The resurrected Jesus invites us on an adventure promising to be with us wherever he leads us.

The empty tomb and the resurrection are not simply distant historical facts; they are daily realities that affect our lives today, tomorrow and in the days, months and years ahead. For we hear those words again, Shine, Jesus Shine in the hearts of everyone on this Easter Day.