

LIZ CURTIS HIGGS

Best-selling author of *The Women of Christmas*

*The*  
Women  
*of*  
Easter



*Encounter the Savior with*

MARY OF BETHANY, MARY OF NAZARETH,

*and* MARY MAGDALENE



Praise for  
*The Women of Easter*

“Liz Curtis Higgs has an incredible way of giving us a fresher, deeper understanding of God’s Word. In *The Women of Easter*, she takes us right into the days surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, where we find our contemporary concerns reflected in the faces of the women who witnessed His ministry firsthand. And we see for ourselves the love of a Savior who laid down His life so we might live free. This book is the perfect companion for Easter and beyond!”

—JENNIE ALLEN, founder of IF:Gathering and author of *Nothing to Prove*

“In this beautifully tender yet scripturally deep book, Liz Curtis Higgs gives us a chance to view Easter through brand-new eyes. A fresh point of view from women who knew Jesus best and loved Him most.”

—JOANNA WEAVER, author of *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*

“Liz Curtis Higgs is a sister of mine, perhaps the wisest and most joyful sister of them all. She knows the women of the Bible, and she loves the women of our day. Most important, she knows what it means to have a dramatic encounter with Jesus. In *The Women of Easter*, Liz reveals and allows us to relive the extraordinary effect Jesus had on the lives of Mary, Mary, and Mary. Through these pages you will be inspired by the insightful prose of Liz and the life-changing power of the Savior.”

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“Liz Curtis Higgs has crafted a book that is unique and profound in its intimate look into the lives of the women who served Jesus throughout His ministry. *The Women of Easter* reminds us that Jesus has always used women to propel His kingdom in mighty ways. This book will challenge women everywhere to step faithfully into their calling with full abandon.”

—CHRISTINE CAINE, founder of A21 and Propel Women

Praise for  
*The Women of Christmas*

“Breathtaking! *The Women of Christmas* is tender and joy filled and funny and faithful. With genuine warmth, profound wisdom, and refreshing wonder, Liz Curtis Higgs offers up a perfect seasonal blend—just what every woman in the midst of Christmas needs. I savored every word.”

—ANN VOSKAMP, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*

“Liz Curtis Higgs ably mines the Scriptures, revealing undiscovered treasures in the familiar story. Through the pages of this powerful little book, we get to peer into the hearts of these women and find our own hearts melting at the beauty of God’s grace.”

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—DEE BRESTIN, author of *Idol Lies: Facing the Truth About Our Deepest Desires*

“*The Women of Christmas* invites us to steal away with our Savior during the hustle and bustle of one of the busiest seasons of the year. In her warm and welcoming voice, Liz Curtis Higgs draws us into the compelling stories of the women who surrounded our Messiah’s birth and encourages us to consider our own relationship with Him. An inspirational and biblically rich devotional. What a wonderful way to experience Christmas!”

—KELLY MINTER, author of *Nehemiah: A Heart That Can Break*



*The*  
**Women**  
*of*  
**Easter**



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WATERBROOK

## THE WOMEN OF EASTER

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*To my big sisters, Sarah Schwarz and Mary Dickinson,  
remembering our Easter mornings together,  
when we wore hats and gloves  
and Mom-made dresses.*

*Thanks for welcoming me into the family  
(even though we all know how that turned out).*

*Much love to you, dearies,  
every season of the year.*

*XOX*



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## A Season of Grace

She sat in the pew across from us, dressed entirely in yellow. No more than four years old, she was utterly adorable, from the circlet of yellow flowers in her hair to her lacy dress, pale tights, and Mary Jane shoes.

But here's what struck me. This little girl hadn't simply come to church. *She'd come to see God.*

When we stood to sing "He lives! He lives!" she jumped up on the cushioned pew and kept on jumping, clapping her hands in perfect rhythm with the pipe organ. With each verse she grew more animated, not seeking attention, but simply caught up in the joy of the moment. While the rest of us sang, she worshiped.

*What if I did that? I wondered. What if I offered God my whole self, nothing held back?*

Despite her grandmother's patient attempts to put a lid on all that enthusiasm, the girl just couldn't help it. When the last chord rang out, her upturned face shone like the sun as she stretched up her hands to celebrate Jesus.

I don't know her name, but I hope it's *Mary*. She has all the makings of a woman of Easter: joyful, hopeful, faithful.

In the pages to come, we'll meet three women of Easter who poured out their lives for their beloved Teacher in much the same

way the women of Christmas—Elizabeth, Mary, and Anna—honored and served the infant Jesus. Mary of Bethany prepared the Lord for burial by anointing Him with a priceless perfume. Mary of Nazareth, who'd watched Jesus draw His first breath, bravely watched Him breathe His last. Mary Magdalene witnessed His resurrection and proclaimed the good news to His disciples.

Amazing. Amazing. Amazing.

When you turn the page, you'll find our journey begins on a somber note. Jesus is our greatest source of joy, but He is also "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."<sup>1</sup> All through Advent we anticipate His birth. All through Lent we anticipate His death.

The word *Lent* means "the lengthening of daylight hours," the coming of spring, when purple and white crocuses push through the hard ground, promising warmer days to come. In many churches the forty weekdays from Ash Wednesday to Easter are devoted to fasting and abstinence, honoring the Lord's forty days in the wilderness.<sup>2</sup> Some believers focus on repentance and prayer during the Lenten season. Others scrub their houses even as they ask the Lord to cleanse them of bad thoughts and bad habits. Many of us choose to give up something for Lent, fully aware that nothing can compare to the life Jesus laid down for us.

His sacrifice is the heart of the story. But not the end of the story.

The Lord's resurrection is the most glorious, victorious moment in history. You and I will watch these ancient scenes unfold through the eyes of three women who were witnesses, who were there. Just the thought gives me goose bumps.

All three Marys will show us what happens when we encounter the love of our Savior and are transformed. That's what Lent is all about. A time of renewal. A season of grace.

I'm *so* glad you're here.



# One

Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
I in my Savior am happy and blest;  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with His goodness, **lost in His love.**

—FANNY CROSBY, "BLESSED ASSURANCE," 1873





## Lost in His Love

He was dying. Of that Mary of Bethany was certain. She knelt beside him, fresh tears spilling down her cheeks. Her beloved brother, Lazarus, lay on a narrow bed, his skin as dull and lifeless as his dun-colored tunic. A twisted cord hung loosely around his waist. His chest looked sunken, empty.

Mary wept in silence, smoothing her hand over his brow, longing for answers. *We need You, Jesus.* He alone could heal her brother, make him well again, make him whole. If she sent word, would He come? *Please, Lord.*

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

*John 11:1*

The original Greek tells us Lazarus was “weak, feeble.”<sup>1</sup> He was not suffering from a common cold or an abscessed tooth. No, this illness held little promise of recovery. If you’ve lost a sibling, if you’ve walked in Mary’s footsteps, then you understand her sorrow.

Sadly, I know Mary’s heartache all too well.

When the first e-mail about my brother Tom appeared in my inbox, I assumed his liver disease was curable. Surgery. Medicine. There had to be a solution. He was fifteen years older than I was, but he wasn't old.

This was the brother who took me canoeing, who showed me the beauty of nature, who talked our mother into letting me keep the kitten I brought home from the PTA festival. Tom was caring, funny, and wise, and he loved the little sister he called Rootie Toot.

As e-mails turned into lengthy phone calls, the reports grew dire. "Months." "Weeks." My sisters and I planned a trip west to see him, hoping Tom would rally and prove the doctors wrong. We loved him desperately. But we could not save him and arrived too late to say good-bye. Even now, years later, the missed opportunity and the tragic loss still weigh heavily on our hearts. It's an ache that never goes away, a missing piece that can't be replaced.

Mary of Bethany and her sister, Martha, surely felt the same way about their brother, Lazarus. Helpless, almost hopeless. Longing for their good friend Jesus to rescue him. It's been rightly said "the sickness of those we love is our affliction."<sup>2</sup> Mary and Martha shared their brother's every wince of pain, every halting breath.

Before we continue with their story, let's step back to the first biblical scene that features these women encountering Jesus. We'll do this not only to understand them better but also to learn more about the One these sisters loved and served.

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. *Luke 10:38*

The village, situated in a pleasant spot surrounded by fine trees,<sup>3</sup> is not named here, but the woman is. “A certain woman” (ASV) called Martha. Since the passage mentions “her home,” Martha was likely the oldest sibling and therefore head of the household, the one in charge.<sup>4</sup>

Picture a two-story house built of limestone with a dirt floor and a broad outer stairway leading to an upper room.<sup>5</sup> An enclosed courtyard, meant for socializing and cooking, was shared by Martha and her neighbors.<sup>6</sup>

Since we find no mention in the Bible of parents, spouses, or children for Martha and her siblings and no gainful employment is described, they may have received a sizable inheritance.<sup>7</sup> If so, we’ll soon see it was well spent to care for those in need.

Like a first-century Martha Stewart, Martha of Bethany threw open her door to this itinerant preacher, this miracle worker capable of casting out demons and healing the sick. She may not have grasped the whole of it yet, that He was “God manifest in the flesh.”<sup>8</sup> But Martha knew what was required—food and shelter—and that was enough for her.

Now a confession: I’m not a confident hostess. If a friend stops by unannounced, I’ve been known to stand on our back porch and talk to her rather than invite her to come in and sit at my kitchen table. Why? Because it has crumbs on it. Because the sink is full of dishes. Because I might be expected to serve her something worth eating. Because I’m still learning how to “offer hospitality to one another”<sup>9</sup> without fear of disappointing people.

Yet Martha gladly opened her home. Impressive.

She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet  
listening to what he said. *Luke 10:39*

Though Martha was head of the house, “Mary seems to have been its heart.”<sup>10</sup> We picture her seated on the floor—quiet, attentive, devoted. Not goofing off, not daydreaming, not avoiding work. Just listening instead of speaking. “We *hear* Martha; we *see* Mary.”<sup>11</sup>

Having “settled down at the Lord’s feet” (PHILLIPS), Mary of Bethany fixed her gaze on Jesus. From her vantage point, no one else was in the room. What was Mary listening to? Literally, “the word of him.” In Greek, the *logos* of Him.<sup>12</sup> “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”<sup>13</sup> She wasn’t merely hearing His voice. She was “hearing the word” (YLT).

No wonder she didn’t move.

In the first century, sitting at a teacher’s feet was the mark of a disciple, a follower, a faithful student. The apostle Paul explained, “At the feet of Gamaliel I was educated.”<sup>14</sup> It was a physical position meant to show humility, respect, and a willingness to listen. Jesus, who invited His followers to “learn from me,”<sup>15</sup> welcomed Mary of Bethany in His traveling classroom in an era when Jewish females were relegated to the women’s section in the back of a synagogue, hidden behind a screen.<sup>16</sup>

I stood in a similar place one October morning in Prague, visiting the oldest active synagogue in Europe, built in the thirteenth century.<sup>17</sup> On the western side was a dim outer corridor with small openings high up on the wall, permitting women to listen to the Torah being read inside the synagogue proper. Imagine our medieval sisters huddled beside those rough stones, straining to hear. Yet centuries earlier Mary of Bethany listened and learned at her Savior’s feet right beside his male disciples.



Jesus did not rebuke Mary or remind her of her place. He made room for her. He invited her to stay. Gently but firmly Jesus defied the culture and set people free, finding “no need to enforce the strictest gender-role customs of his time.”<sup>18</sup> If Mary wanted to sit at His feet, she was most welcome.

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. *Luke 10:40*

I always pay attention to the *buts* of the Bible. A few letters, easily overlooked, the word *but* raises a red flag each time it shows up. Here *but* makes a comparison—“by contrast” (CEB) Martha was distracted.

*Distracted.* We know what that looks like. Martha didn’t need the Internet or a smart phone to divert her attention. The Greek word for “distracted” comes from a verb meaning “to draw away,”<sup>19</sup> like dragging a heavy sword out of its scabbard. Martha was “pulled away by all she had to do” (MSG) and became “overly occupied and too busy” (AMPC) to pay attention to their honored guest.

True, her preparations were her means of service, her brand of ministry. Martha was doing good things. Godly things. Useful things.

*But . . .*

She came to him and asked, . . . *Luke 10:40*

This wasn’t as polite as it sounds. Martha “burst in” (PHILLIPS), “interrupting them” (MSG). Mary remained seated while Martha stood before Jesus, in His face, determined to be seen and heard.

. . . “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?” *Luke 10:40*

Really, Martha? *No one* cares like Jesus. Even so, she was convinced He would agree with her. “Doesn’t it seem unfair?” (NLT), she asked Him. Or here’s the LRV, the Lizzie Revised Version: “I’m upset. Aren’t you upset?” The original Greek suggests Martha felt “left behind, neglected, forsaken”<sup>20</sup> by her younger sister, who was “completely oblivious to all the fussing and fuming of her sister—even Martha’s disapproving looks did not penetrate.”<sup>21</sup>

Any hostess who has slaved away in the kitchen while her family and guests enjoyed themselves in the living room can empathize with Martha. In her day a woman’s tasks included grinding flour, baking bread, tending the garden, spinning wool, washing clothes, and cooking all the food.<sup>22</sup> I can push the Start button on my microwave oven and throw in a load of laundry, but that long list of tasks? Whoa. Easy to see why Martha was weary.

“Tell her to help me!” *Luke 10:40*

The exclamation point reveals all we need to know about her mood at the moment. We can see and hear this “harried, frustrated woman . . . bossing around the Creator of the universe.”<sup>23</sup> Rather than confront her sister directly, Martha asked Jesus to intervene. “Tell her to get up and help me!” (PHILLIPS).

Now it was Martha’s turn to learn from the Teacher.

I wonder if Jesus shook His head when He said her name. Twice.

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, . . .” *Luke 10:41*

“Martha, Martha.” The repetition was a “tender rebuke.”<sup>24</sup> Rather than applaud her work ethic, the Lord chided her for “fretting” (CJB) and “fussing” (MSG). “His concern was not for the state of her home and table, but for the state of her soul and her heart.”<sup>25</sup>

No question about it, Jesus was scolding Martha. Not because what she did was unimportant or unnecessary, but because Martha thought her efforts were of greater significance than Mary’s.

We know this woman. We *are* this woman. We fret, fuss, and find a dozen reasons to be unhappy when we feel overworked or underappreciated. Perhaps that’s why the Bible introduces us to these two sisters side by side—to show us by example what God values most.

Jesus, who once cautioned His followers, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life,”<sup>26</sup> was urging Martha to change her focus from standing in the kitchen to kneeling at His feet.

“. . . but few things are needed—or indeed only one.”  
*Luke 10:42*

The things we actually *need* would make a short list. Very short. For those who believe in the name of Jesus, there’s “only one thing that is essential” (CJB). Rather than fancy meals or tidy rooms, what matters most is Jesus Himself. “Martha thought Christ had need of her and of her services, but Mary knew that it was she that needed Christ.”<sup>27</sup>

The truth? Martha's well-tended house long ago turned to dust. Every wooden lintel, every clay lamp, every leather sandal gone. But Jesus? He is with us still and will be forever. Mary of Bethany grasped that truth and chose wisely.

“Mary has chosen what is better, . . .” *Luke 10:42*

“Martha had chosen duty and Mary had chosen Jesus.”<sup>28</sup> Mary knew the difference between temporal and eternal. “Her soul had one great want,”<sup>29</sup> and it wasn't matching wine cups. She wanted Jesus. His presence, His teaching, His brotherly affection—these satisfied her deepest longings.

We know the one thing for Mary. And Jesus assures us that a relationship with Him is ours to keep.

“. . . and it will not be taken away from her.” *Luke 10:42*

Physical things can be snatched from our hands but not His mercy, His grace, His wisdom. They are sealed within us by the Holy Spirit.

As a devout Jew, Mary surely knew the psalms. We can imagine her whispering in her heart—or aloud so He might hear—“LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.”<sup>30</sup>

Mary understood what mattered most. If we learn from her, “if we become women who seek the one ‘needful’ thing, we will see our lives transformed.”<sup>31</sup> Such transformation isn't a selfish longing. It's what Christ wants most for us: “To be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”<sup>32</sup>

Mary of Bethany had that aim from the start, it seemed. Martha was learning from her example and, most of all, from the Master Teacher. Though Jesus knew their temperaments were poles apart, it's clear that He loved and understood both of them and thought no less of one than the other.<sup>33</sup> He didn't favor one kind of personality, didn't suggest that women could serve Him in only one way. In the kingdom of God "there is need for both vigorous caregiving and quiet listening."<sup>34</sup> These women exemplified both possibilities.

Now that we've met the sisters, let's return to our opening scene with their ailing brother, Lazarus. He, too, needed a Savior.

So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." *John 11:3*

When they dispatched a messenger to search for the Master, they didn't say "Come running," but surely that's what the sisters prayed He would do.

Lazarus is described as the one Jesus loved. The Greek word here, *philos*, means "beloved, dear, friendly."<sup>35</sup> This is the kind of love siblings share, which goes far deeper than a casual friendship. Mary and Martha reminded Jesus how much He cared for Lazarus, perhaps to ensure His swift response. After all, their brother's Hebrew name meant "God has helped."<sup>36</sup> A reason to hope, then. A reason to ask.

They "sent someone to tell Jesus" (ERV) that Lazarus was sick but not that he was dying. In that time and place, with little more than medicinal herbs on hand, any ailment could quickly lead to a tragic end. This family needed more than a pastoral visit. They needed the Great Physician.

Meanwhile, Jesus was in the countryside across the Jordan River in Bethabara, where John the Baptist began his ministry.<sup>37</sup> Bethabara, perhaps twenty miles east of Bethany, was a single day's journey on foot. The messenger found Jesus there and conveyed the sad news about Lazarus and his illness.

When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death." *John 11:4*

Only a God who knows the future could offer such hope! Though "the man is sick" (WE), Jesus told those around Him, "this illness isn't fatal" (CEB). With His own death and resurrection on the horizon, Jesus wanted them to know that Lazarus's story would end well. And so would His.

Jesus was assuring His people that God the Father would be with them through the painful days to come—the waiting, the sorrow, the grief. Even if "God does not spare those he loves from life's difficulties,"<sup>38</sup> He does promise to bring us through and make the journey worthwhile.

"No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." *John 11:4*

It's deeply comforting to know that sickness, even death, is purposeful. Not random, not meaningless, not "Oh, what a shame." Everything that happened to Lazarus was designed to "bring glory to God and his Son" (CEV). A wonderful plan, though extremely difficult for Lazarus and his sisters, who couldn't fathom the joy that was to come, who didn't know that "our light and

momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”<sup>39</sup>

What they clung to—and what we must cling to as well—is the Lord’s immeasurable and unconditional love. He knows our needs and He meets them. He sees our hurts and He heals them. He understands our fears and He overcomes them.

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

*John 11:5*

So personal and so endearing. An entire verse to capture the Lord’s deep affection for three ordinary people. The Greek tells us His love for them was “ongoing, continuing.”<sup>40</sup> Not a one-time thing but an all-the-time thing. These siblings from Bethany “were His dear friends, and He held them in loving esteem” (AMPC).

Interesting that Martha and Lazarus are mentioned by name but Mary is not. We find only the Greek word for “sister,”<sup>41</sup> yet each person is listed separately and emphatically with the word *and* between them. Jesus loved Martha *and* her sister *and* Lazarus, personally and individually. As we say in the online world, these were His friends In Real Life.

The Greek word for “loved” in this passage is *agapaó*.<sup>42</sup> It’s a higher, more spiritual form of love and conveys a sense of preference, of being chosen. Jesus not only loved these followers, but He also made an eternal investment in His relationship with them, just as He has with us.

His friendship is “deeper, closer, and more tender still, in which all believers have their share.”<sup>43</sup> Mary and Martha embraced

His love like the lifeline it is. Have you done the same, friend? Do you know how much He loves you and how precious you are to Him?

Though Jesus responded to the news of Lazarus's illness in a way that might seem unfeeling, even cruel, don't lose heart. This is Jesus we're talking about.

So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where  
he was two more days, . . . *John 11:6*

*Hmm.* Knowing His close friend was sick, shouldn't Jesus at least have gone to see him? To comfort Lazarus? To pray for him? Instead—and rather “oddly” (MSG)—Jesus “stayed where he was” (CEB). Two. Long. Days. He got the news but didn't move.

Here's why: He loved them and planned to do “something great and extraordinary for them.”<sup>44</sup> It would be a miracle unlike any other He'd performed. People had witnessed Him heal wounds, cure diseases, cast out demons, banish blindness, even resuscitate someone newly deceased. What He planned for Lazarus required more time. Christ's followers needed to see that resurrection was possible even several days after a body was buried in a tomb.

While Jesus tarried by the Jordan, two women in Bethany watched their brother slip away from them. His final hours are not described in God's Word, but we can imagine what they were like. Agonizing for Lazarus. Devastating for his sisters.

In our darkest moments, when we cry out to God and wonder if He's listening, He sometimes whispers, *Wait*. It's a hard word to hear yet comforting as well. It means He is there, He is with us, and He has a plan, even if it is not our plan.



Then Lazarus's heart stopped beating. The brother they loved was gone.

*So hard, my sisters. So hard.*

All hope abandoned, Mary and Martha prepared their brother's body, anointing him with myrrh and wrapping him in grave-clothes. According to Jewish custom, a corpse was to be laid in a burial cave as quickly as possible.<sup>45</sup> The sisters could not delay. Besides, if Jesus *did* walk through their door, it would be too late.

But with the Lord it's never too late.

Mind if I say that again? *With Jesus it's never too late.* Never too late for Him to mend a relationship you thought was broken. Never too late for Him to help you get clean, get sober, get a new start. Never too late for Him to work a miracle in your life.

He's on His way, beloved.

. . . and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." *John 11:7*

"We should go" (ERV), He told his men in Bethabara. It wasn't a suggestion. The Greek means "to lead."<sup>46</sup> The Lord was fully aware of what had happened in Bethany and knew it was time to return.

See how carefully He chose His words.

. . . he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."  
*John 11:11*

The disciples missed the Lord's veiled reference to death. They thought only of the literal meaning—"to awaken out of

sleep”<sup>47</sup>—and told Jesus that if Lazarus remained in bed, he would surely get better. These men were clueless about the miracle required to stir Lazarus. When Jesus said, “I go to raise him from sleep” (WYC), the key word was *raise*.

It seemed Jesus needed to explain further. They had to understand.

So then he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, . . .”

*John 11:14*

Their eyes must have widened in disbelief. *Dead?* The word sounded so cold, so final. Yet Jesus spoke about His friend’s demise “openly” (WYC) and “freely” (VLT). From the Lord’s standpoint, Lazarus was merely sleeping—a minor issue for One who would conquer the grave. As Paul later wrote to the believers at Thessalonica, “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.”<sup>48</sup>

Hope was exactly what Jesus offered His disciples that day on the banks of the Jordan, wanting to strengthen their faith and prepare them for the challenging days ahead. As we read these words, their hope becomes our hope. Death is not the end for those who love the Lord. It’s the beginning of a new and forever life.

“. . . and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe.” *John 11:15*

Jesus stated clearly His intended purpose: He wanted His disciples “to trust and rely” (AMPC) on Him. “Now you will have a

chance to put your faith in me” (CEV), He told them. “Now you will really believe” (NLT).

Weren’t they already believers? Yes, in the same way many of us are. We identify ourselves as Christian, we attend church, we put money in the offering plate, and we pray. Jesus was asking His disciples to take another step—if not a leap—and trust Him completely in every situation, however difficult or uncertain.

Though we may believe with our heads, Jesus wants us to believe with our whole hearts. To place our lives in His hands and put our faith in God, who is “trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.”<sup>349</sup>

Mary of Bethany believed in Him. Martha did too. Even so, Jesus said to His followers, “You’re about to be given new grounds for believing” (MSG).

*That’s what we want, Lord, this Easter and always. We want to believe.*

Believe in His power to change us. Believe He can bring us back to life.

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