



Release Women Monthly Email - April 2019

Hello Friend

Christ is risen, He is risen indeed – Hallelujah!

Less than a week ago these words were being shouted out in services around the world as we celebrated the glorious resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday morning!

The first witnesses of that wonderful event were women. According to Luke's gospel, these were the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and who had witnessed his crucifixion. The same women who had followed Joseph of Arimathea as he laid Jesus' body in a borrowed tomb and who had prepared spices and perfumes to anoint Jesus' body. These were some of the same women who had helped to support Jesus as he 'travelled about from one town and village to another proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God' (Luke 8:1-3).

In Matthew's gospel we read of how Mary Magdalene and Mary (the mother of James) went to the tomb early on the Sabbath morning where they met with an angel of the Lord who showed them that Christ had risen. The angel entrusted them with the responsibility to go and tell the disciples! Afraid, yet full of joy, the women ran off to spread the word of Jesus' resurrection, but they encountered Jesus himself and fell at his feet in worship. Jesus affirmed the responsibility they had been entrusted with and instructed them to go and tell the disciples.

These are familiar Easter stories and yet the remarkable, but easily overlooked, fact is that women provided for Jesus, his first risen appearance was to women and the ones he entrusted to be witnesses to his resurrection were women. Yet women in Jesus' day are like many of the women we serve in countries around the world today: frequently oppressed and marginalised, whose word does not count and who are often deemed to be worthless.

But Jesus didn't treat women according to the social norms of the day. Just as he valued the women around him and entrusted them to further his kingdom, so he is doing with Christian women today in places of persecution. Women like those in the Strength to Stand groups in Egypt, who are living for

Jesus in situations of oppression and poverty and who are helping to strengthen the church. Women in prison for their faith in Eritrea, like Twen (pictured), who is praying that God will be glorified in Eritrea. Women like 'Esther', a North Korean defector who agreed to be sex-trafficked into China, to escape the brutalities of life in North Korea. Her life was transformed when she became a Christian and she now shares the gospel with other North Koreans. You can read her remarkable story in April's [Voice](#) magazine.



Jesus values each and every one of us. Just as he used the ordinary women from Galilee to do something remarkable, so he is using the ordinary women mentioned above today to serve him in situations of persecution. Whatever Jesus is asking you to do, whatever responsibility he is entrusting to you, whoever he is asking you to witness to, wherever he is asking you to serve, he will enable and equip you, just as he has always done.

With thanks...

Thank you to everyone who took part in the 40x40x40 Lent initiative. Please send your cheques, made payable to Release International with '40x40x40' written on the back, to the office. The money raised will support some of the women in the Strength to Stand groups in Egypt and Pakistan.

Blessings,

Release Women Team

Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

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