



He is Risen

John 20:1-18

Sir Praise-a-lot spurred his horse into a full gallop and raced across the sunny fields. As he neared the Garden, he slowed his horse to a trot and looked over his shoulder to check on Gus who was following and carrying his horse, Duncan. He called, "Come, Squire Gus! You're way behind. Keep up!"

Gus and Duncan were half way across the field. Gus was barely hanging on to Duncan. "I'm trying! Slow down!" Gus yelled in between gasps for air.

Sir Praise-a-lot laughed and trotted back to Gus. "Never! A knight always rides his fastest, fights his hardest and gives his best for God's glory!"

Gus lowered the horse from his back and slumped to the ground. "I think I gave all I have," he wheezed.

"Nonsense! On your feet, Squire! I'm twice your age and I feel fit as a fiddle," he boasted.

Gus let out a groan of pain. "That's because you're riding on your horse. I have to carry mine!"

"Why are you carrying Rufus?" asked Sir Praise-a-lot.

"Because he gave up carrying me for Lent, remember?"

"Yes, but, it's Easter. Lent is over."

"Rufus, you tricked me!" scolded Gus. "Bad horsy!"

"Oh Gus, you are out of shape. To be a true knight you must be in tip-top condition, like me! I am the very model of knighthood, fast, strong, bold, handsome and... and...oh, still so full of pride. 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only,'" Sir Praise-a-lot reminded himself as he dismounted and helped the knight-in-training to his feet. Then he picked up both horses' leads and walked them slowly towards the garden.

"Sir Praise-a-lot," Gus began. "I have been working out every day, climbing the tower steps, swimming the moat, practicing my sword play." As usual, Gus pulled out his sword and pretended to fight an invisible enemy.

"Ugh," Sir Praise-a-lot mumbled under his breath as Gus dropped the sword; nearly missing his foot. Out loud he encouraged, "Keep practicing!"

"I have been!" Gus exclaimed. "I've even been exercising with that DVD you gave me, 'Sweating to the Middle Ages,' but becoming a knight is really hard work."

"Of course, it's hard!" Sir Praise-a-lot confirmed. "A knight must be prepared to spring into action at any moment! Like the disciples!"

"Jesus' followers were men of action?" Gus asked as they tied up their horses near the garden wall.

"Men and women of action! I shall show you." Sir Praise-a-lot retrieved the Bible from its special window. "Gus, do you remember what they did with Jesus' body after He died?" The older knight asked.

Gus thought for a moment. "Yes, His followers wrapped Him in white linen cloth and placed Him in a tomb. Then they rolled a very large heavy stone in front of the tomb."

"Pontius Pilate even placed a guard in front of the stone so no one would try to move it." Sir Praise-a-lot added. "But three days later, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and discovered that the stone had been rolled away! She was afraid that someone took the Lord's body, so she ran like the wind to go find Peter and John."

"What did Peter and John do?" Gus asked.

"They started running for the tomb!"

Gus shook his head. "More running? Didn't those guys ever get tired?"

"They were running because they knew something had happened to their King." Sir Praise-a-lot explained. "John ran faster and reached the tomb first."

"Go, John! Go!" Gus cheered. "Did he see Jesus?"

"No, but he stood at the door and looked inside. He saw the strips of white linen that Jesus had been wrapped in," the knight said. "But when Peter arrived, he went right on inside. Then, the Bible says: 'Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb, first, also went inside. He saw and believed.'"

"Of course, John believed because he had seen the empty tomb! I wish I could have seen that!" Gus exclaimed.

Sir Praise-a-lot smiled. "But we have something even better—we can see Jesus!"

A confused look spread across Gus' face. "He rose again and went up to His throne in Heaven. How can I see Him if He's not here?"

"Who says He's not here?" Sir Praise-a-lot challenged the young man. "King Jesus is here! He lives in the hearts of believers like you and I every day."

"That's true...but...you still can't see Him!" Gus defended.

"Oh, but you can!" The knight replied. "You can see Him in the Bible! You can see Him in the reports of His followers like Peter and John, Matthew, Mark, Luke..."

"And Mary!" Gus added.

Sir Praise-a-lot nodded. "And Mary, and so many others! You can see Him in the miracles He has done and is still doing! You can see His fingerprints in everything He created and you can see Him in the acts of kindness we do for one another!"

"Wow! No wonder the disciples and Mary ran so fast!" Gus said. "And they believed He had risen even when they didn't see Him in the tomb!"

"They believed He had risen *because* they didn't see Him in the tomb." Sir Praise-a-lot corrected.

"And through faith we believe in Him even though we have not seen Him with our eyes!" Gus added.

"But one day you will." The knight stated.

Gus was surprised. "I will? I will see Jesus?"

Sir Praise-a-lot nodded. "All of us who follow Him will."

Gus stared hard at his teacher. "How do you know?" he pressed.

Sir Praise-a-lot held up the Bible. "The Bible promises! Remember the verse we sing? 'I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And I will see God. I myself will see Him with my own eyes.'"

Gus sat still, "Wow! We're going to see God! Now I'm as excited as the disciples were to serve the King!"

Sir Praise-a-lot laughed. "We all are!" He agreed. "And remember, serving the King is the noblest thing! Come, young Gus, let's finish your training for the day." The two men walked into the courtyard to practice their sword play.