

Simon the Brave

Simon knew something terrible had happened. As his younger brothers and sisters slept on the ground beside him, Simon's parents spoke softly late into the night. His mother cried while his father asked God to help them understand. "He was supposed to be the One," his father whispered. "The Messiah. Our Savior." Simon knew that as the oldest son, he should have been the bravest. But most of the time he didn't feel brave at all—especially not now. The hard clay floor under his sleeping mat felt colder than usual that night. Somehow the whole world felt colder too.

The next day, Simon's cousin told him the awful news. Roman soldiers had arrested Jesus and taken Him away. They'd hung Him on a cross. And then—He'd died. Tears stung Simon's eyes.

Why would anyone want to hurt Jesus? He was so kind. He made sick people well. He made blind people see. He fed the hungry and helped the lost. Simon was never afraid when Jesus was near.

The next morning, Simon's family awoke just before sunrise. Sadness filled their little home like a cold wind. After a small meal of barley cakes and cheese, Simon quietly fed the animals, grabbed two large pots, and started his long walk to the well. At nine years old, it was Simon's job to get water for his father's farm. It was his way of helping his family. **On the way home, Simon felt alone and scared.** How would he ever feel brave again, now that Jesus was gone? Suddenly, the ground beneath Simon's sandals began to sway. The water in the pots sloshed and spilled as he fell to the ground. A few seconds later the shaking finally stopped; the earthquake was over.

Simon got up slowly, his heart racing. A flash of light caught his eye. What was that? It looked like



lightning, but there wasn't a cloud in the sky. More frightened than he'd ever been, Simon ran to the top of a nearby hill. Simon saw in the distance a large cave, a tomb, the entrance covered by a giant stone. **Roman soldiers stood guard at the tomb while two women walked toward it.** Two others were also there, their faces as bright as the sun, their clothes whiter than snow. *Angels*, thought Simon. He crept closer for a better look.

The guards shook with fear and fainted as one of the angels rolled the stone away. Seeing that the tomb was empty, the two women dropped to their knees. In a gentle voice, an angel said to them, "Don't be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. You will see Him soon."

The women wept with joy. Could it be? Was Jesus really alive? Simon had to find out. He followed the women as they hurried back to town, not sure what he would find. And that's when he saw Him. Jesus stood on the road not far up ahead. The two women rushed to him, falling at his feet. "Do not be afraid," He told them. "Go and tell others what you have seen."

Simon was overjoyed. And he had never felt so strong or so brave. What was there to be afraid of? **Jesus was alive! He'd died for the sins of the world and then He'd risen again.** If

Jesus could conquer death, He could do anything! Believing in Jesus gave Simon all the courage he needed. "Go and tell others what you have seen," Simon heard Jesus say. So he did. "Do not be afraid," Jesus said. So he wasn't—not anymore.

by Kathryn O'Brien

"Don't be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. You will see Him soon."

PARENTS:

After reading this fictional story based on Matthew 28 to your kids, ask them about a time they felt scared. Assure them that everyone feels frightened sometimes—even grown-ups! Share with them that when we know Jesus, we don't have to be afraid. Pray as a family, asking God to grow your faith and to give you courage to tell others that Jesus is alive!