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**Early Morning Miracle**  
**A Short Story**



**By**  
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## **Dedication**

I would like to thank and dedicate this  
book to Jesus Christ my Lord and  
Savior in His help in writing Easter  
Morning Miracle.

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## **Preface**

Eugene scratches his open sores with a broken pottery. If only he could be healed like the other lepers. Now it was only a dream, as Eugene looks to Joseph tomb now holding the holy man name Jesus.

## **Present**

Just down the road that day was a crucifixion of three men who stood on crosses was big news and it being Passover the holy town was full of pilgrims each year.

Lots and lots of talk about the one-man name Jesus, was big news as the sign over his head said JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS, written in three different languages Aramaic, Latin and Greek. Causing more talk as pilgrims still entering the holy city looked on.

Eugene the leper watched all the activities at Golgotha the place of crucifixion. The weather was not the best.

Eugene hands and feet being a leper hurt all the time, but when they nailed the holy man hands and feet to the cross, Eugene felt the pain with every blow of the hammer.

Eugene had to look away, the pain and cruelty was too much.

He watched the mother of Jesus crying at the cross for her son named Jesus as his crown of thrones on his head drips blood down to the bystanders below.

Eugene gasped, as the man name Jesus mother wiped up the blood under her son's cross, with her mantle as two more women and a young man came to help, until the Roman soldiers chase them away.

Eugene watched the Roman soldiers gambling for the holy man's clothes and a big argument amongst them.

Eugene tried to listen to the discussion that the holy man was having with his mother. It was a big surprise to Eugene, that this man Jesus gave his mother to a young man, "Dear woman, here is your son" and to the young man, "here is your mother."

It was so touching. Eugene had to look away, as he thought of his own mother, as he brushes away tears going down his leper cheeks.

It was such a dark gloomy day, being just a few miles from garden where Eugene worked. Jesus last words, still rang in Eugene ears, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

The final words of the holy man rang in Eugene ears, "It is finished." Suddenly lightning filled the sky and thunder and then a big earthquake.

Suddenly a Levi came running from the Jewish temple out of breath and exhausted. "The curtain is torn...the temple curtain is torn from top to bottom. God did it!" The Jewish people circled around him to get the whole story.

A Jewish priest struck the man across the face to quiet him. "Keep quiet." A big discussion about the Jewish temple spread that the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom causing such a stir in the Jewish community.

Eugene slowly walked back to the garden he was late for work. He passes the centurion who has been keeping guard. The centurion said nervously, "Truly this man is the Son of God."

Before leaving, Eugene watched a Roman soldier put a spear through the heart of man name Jesus as blood and water gush out, a true sign of death.

Eugene shaken with all that has happened with disbelief. He walked back to his leper community still pondering what this man Jesus said in his last breath. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Eugene took his time as he thought of all what he saw today. Eugene saw death and knew from first hand seeing so many crucifixions at Golgotha, but this man Jesus; it was more than he could take.

Eugene just made it back to see Jayson the head gardener his uncle frantic and nervous tonight. Jayson was calling his garden crew together; Jayson's workers were all lepers.

They were not superstitious and would work anywhere plus any hour. Being the untouchable in society a cemetery was the best employment for any lepers. Their clients would never run away or yell at them because of their deformities.

The job at the cemetery was not an easy work. They worked daily hauling out a big lever to help move rocks and cleaning each new tomb for new occupants.

The women lepers would help with embalming and wrapping duties; when no family members or friends were available.

The earthquake had some of lepers still shaken, so Jayson looked firmer, yelling and pushing with a stick so not to touch the lepers to get them to work.

Jayson look at his leper nephew, "Where have you been? You are the only one that the lepers listen too." Eugene had to talk to someone, about what he just experiences at Golgotha. "Sorry uncle, but I have to talk to you about what I just experience at..."

Jayson look stern at Eugene, "Eugene, enough talking, we have work to do. Get working. Talk to those lump heads lepers and get them moving... time is money. Still shaken with the earthquake this afternoon. Some even said they saw bodies of saints coming out of the tombs with glorified bodies. Just crazy talk, get them back to work now... time is money."

Eugene look at the other lepers, "Why are we all rushing around for Uncle?"

Jayson put down his stick and rub his forehead, he hated the thought that his only nephew was a leper, it disturbs him just to look at him.

“A servant from Joseph Arimathea household was sent over, to tell us to get Joseph tomb ready.”

“Uncle I didn’t know Joseph Arimathea died?”

Just then the garden was filling up with new visitors. The lepers hid as the two of the wealthy and respected men in the community came carrying a body they shower with such love and respect as Roman soldiers follow at distant with the temple guards also watching and sneaking and lurking around.

Eugene never saw so much action happening in the garden so late at night; he kept his distant, he handled this part of the garden as Jayson nephew.

Eugene was surprised to see Joseph Arimathea a Sanhedrin, walking around; who was he going to put into his new tomb if not himself?

Nicodemus came back with his male servants carrying baskets after baskets of myrrh and aloe and wrappings. Eugene could not believe his eyes the spices, they must have weighed 75 pounds, only royalty would get that much spices.

Eugene yelled behind a big bush close to Joseph Arimathea tomb, “Sir, do you need my help?” Joseph worried, looked around at the soldiers and temple guards and scratching his beards as he looked at the bush, “No”



The bush talked again.” Sir...who is that you are placing in your tomb?” Eugene voice was a little hoarse another part of leprosy disease.

Joseph looked at the bush and talking to himself,” Jesus of Nazareth...”

Eugene was surprised, usually the individuals crucified at Golgotha, left on the cross to rot as a sign of Rome’s authority, then thrown in mass grave in a valley called Gehenna outside Jerusalem. Eugene worked there once in Gehenna, and still in his nostrils; he could smell the decay and burning garbage even today.

Eugene spoke again, “Sir, I thought the bodies are to stay on the cross?”

Joseph looked more uncomfortable and addressing the bush, “No, the Jewish leaders asked Pilate to have the bodies taken down, because of day of Preparation... and it being the next day a special Sabbath and all.”

Eugene forgot about this week being Passover, being big business in the community, with all those pilgrims coming in...but seeing rotting bodies on crosses would sicken and ruin businesses near the Golgotha. It made sense to take them down.

Eugene look back at Joseph through the branches, he just could not believe this Joseph the richest man in these parts, was bringing this holy man here, to his own new tomb... this puzzled him.

Eugene had heard of Jesus from the four lepers that came back to the leper colony, to pick up their belongings after being healed.

Eugene tried many times, to get close to Jesus hoping the same fate of being healed would happen to him. Eugene had no chance of getting close; he tried many times, but he was always chase away because of his leprosy.

Eugene on his days off, would follow Jesus, and love to listen to him talk; it was refreshing for the little time he had to listen before chased away.

Secretly, Eugene made a covenant with God that he was a true disciple of Jesus, thinking they would never take him in because he was a leper.

Eugene scratched his sores with a broken pottery. If only he could get healed like the other lepers, but now it was only a dream, as Eugene looked to Joseph tomb now holding the holy man name Jesus.

Eugene only hope of healing, was now gone forever. Eugene sighed and saying a small prayer, "Lord, if only you could have healed me?" He looked down at his bleeding sores; he hid his head in his arm weeping, so no one heard him.

Eugene wiped his tears away and pushed the branches of the bush as he watches two women known as the followers of this Jesus watching from afar, something spooks them, they ran away quickly.

Eugene jumped, and hid as more Roman soldiers came into the garden. Their Roman sandals with iron hobnails on the soles came clicking in, making such a racket as they march.

Eugene sat behind the big bush watching the Roman soldiers drinking cheap wine and telling dirty jokes.

Joseph and Nicodemus came out of tomb carrying empty baskets, and the dark night the smell of myrrh, and aloe from the tomb filled the air.

Nicodemus the Pharisee, talking aloud to Joseph, “I remember the night I went to see him he told me I needed to be born again...and he told me, God so love the world He gave His Only Son whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.”

Joseph looks around fearing what others would think of such talk. “He came to earth to give his life as a ransom for many, didn’t he Nicodemus? He even died for our sins?” Both men looked around.

“Joseph, he even foretold about Moses lifting the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up so that everyone who believes in him, may have eternal life. He was telling about his own death.”

Joseph stopped and looked at Nicodemus. ““He sure did... didn’t he?” Do you think he would rise again like the prophecy of Old Testament claim?”

Nicodemus stroking his beard and smiling as he looked up, "I know my God, look how he dried up the red sea, I believe He will."

Joseph and Nicodemus look toward the stone weighing 2 tons. Joseph stopped talking looking for the head gardener.

Jayson rang a small silver bell and a cluster of lepers with Eugene in tote, came out covered head to foot, pulling a noisy big lever to move the enormous stone to position to cover the opening of the tomb.

The lepers after a few grunts and lots of noise as they pull the lever in place to lift the big stone, with no help from the Roman soldiers or Temple guards to help cover the tomb opening shut.

After many slow-moving motions, taking about a half hour with seven lepers Eugene one of them, giving their all, Joseph even helped... after one last push the stone was in place.

The squeaky lever taken back to the leper station. Eugene stayed behind and hid behind his usual hiding place behind the big bush.

Eugene look down at his hands, arms and legs torn still bleeding from all the pulling needed, to move that enormous stone over the opening. It made him so fatigue and so tired. The stone was necessary to keep out robbers and thieves.

Eugene could not sleep; there was too much happening in the garden to miss anything. He sat up on his aching knees and pushed the branches away a little, to watch a Roman guard placing a seal on the stone.

One soldier ran over and read it aloud, "Seal of authority of Rome Empire anyone breaking this seal would get automatic execution."

Eugene watched Nicodemus and Joseph talking again. Eugene would of love to sit in on one of their conversations but being a leper, it had its limitation.

Eugene overheard Joseph add, "What about Lazarus? He was dead four days and Jesus raised him from the dead...why wouldn't He do the same?" Both men walked and talked remembering all that Jesus did on earth, as they left the garden.

Eugene tried to keep his eyes open, but sleep took over him. As day broke about 3:00 am Eugene was awakening by another earthquake.

Eugene rub his eyes, looking around the branches, he couldn't believe his eyes, there was blaze of light coming from within the tomb razing out.

Another earthquake and suddenly the stone moved, causing a blast of light brighter than the sun to cover the whole garden.

Eugene did not hear the noisy lever or see anyone; how did that stone move all by itself and what was that blinding light coming from?

Eugene quickly looked toward the others in the garden he watched the Roman soldiers and the Temple guards look at the bright light and they all became like dead men.

Eugene covered his eyes the light was too bright, he fell to his knees, only in death he would be hid of this leprosy, covering his head thinking the end of the world was here. "Come quickly Lord take me out of this world into your world...please dear Lord."

Eugene heard someone calling out his name, with tears he looked up... only to see a comforting light stood over him. "Eugene don't be afraid, be strong, your prayers have been answered."

Eugene with tears covering his face looked down at his disease arms, it wasn't white washed or filled with sores and blood, and it was like a baby skin.

Eugene looks up at the light he was speechless, he thought he was dead. He heard the bright light speak again. "Eugene, you are alive, go back home and tell your family what has happen to you."

Eugene saw the nail marks on the Bright Light hands. Eugene look toward the Roman soldiers they were all fast asleep.

Finally, Eugene spoke looking down at the ground, not worthily to look at the Divine Light, "Sir, I cannot leave the garden... it's my responsibility, my uncle would have my hid, if I left the garden without his okay."

The bright light touch Eugene head, with His nail marked hands, “Go my son and find your uncle, I will watch over the garden for you.”

Eugene look around the garden, it was so quiet, but birds were singing and animals dancing around. All of God’s creation was enthusiastic and delighted as they glorified the Creator. Even the rocks seem to sing along too.

Eugene watched the Roman soldiers waking fully up now, suddenly with fear and death sentence across their faces, as they ran into the tomb and ran quickly back out, looking like dead men as they left the garden. Talking among themselves, not sure how to explain what they just experience.

Eugene was so delighted, he had a spring in his walk; he hurried to his uncle’s house, to tell what has just happen to himself. Eugene was about a mile away when he turned and walked back to the garden.

He wanted to thank the Bright Light. When he made it back, it was so quiet? He watched as Jewish women carrying spices came over and were talking to a man, but it did not look like Jayson or any of the lepers. One woman called the man “Rabboni”.

He watched the women investigate the tomb and talking to someone in the tomb, they took off running.

In a few minutes, two men came running, the younger one out running the older. They both went into the tomb, when they came out, the older man looked confused and

worried. The younger was all smiles, “He told us Peter, numerous times, he would rise again, and He did.”

Peter look like he just blackmailed his best friend, “I guess.” Peter took another look into the tomb and looking up to heaven to say a prayer, “Please forgive me. What did I do forsaking you, my dear friend? I am not worthy to be your follower.” Peter with his shoulder slouch and looking defeated, walked slowly back down the path.

Eugene quickly ran into the empty tomb, only to see all organized and the wrapping folded nicely in the corner. Eugene knew no one could steal a body and leave the grave clothes folded just right and the face cloth separate from the linen rolled up neatly. It was too perfect. Eugene could not take his eyes off the two angelic being sitting inside on guard. They spoke, “This Jesus you are looking for has risen, and He is not here.”

Eugene with fear ran out of the empty tomb, not sure what to do or even think. Just then, Eugene heard people coming.

Eugene hid in his usual spot behind the bush, just to see the high priest Caiaphas and his followers following Pilate.

Caiaphas remembered like yesterday this Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, at a special meeting formed at the last minute, he is the high priest, decided this Jesus had to die for the Jewish nation to remain in Roman’s favor.

Caiaphas looked down at his torn mantle, ‘this Jesus admitted he was Christ the Messiah...blasphemy.’



Pilate knowing of his error when he used funds from the temple to finance his aqueduct project, causing uproar with the Jewish people many died that day, he was given a reprimand from Rome, but he remains in office.

So, he wanted the Jewish people happy, so they did not report back to Rome again about his actions. Pilate dreaded another upset of his leadership here, but this man name Jesus was another matter.

Pilate remembers how this Jesus even said he was King of the Jews, and he was so different from other prisoners; he made no reply not even one single charge.

It still amazed Pilate, because he found no charge against this innocent man, either did Herod.

Pilate looked at the high priest, "Enough of this. I wash my hands of the innocence of this man. I wanted no part in his death, but you people put him to death not I. I want to forget this day as long as I live."

Pilate remembered what his wife told him about this man, but he would not listen, "Don't condemn that man Pilate as in my dream warn."

Pilate kept ringing his hands. Pilate did not want another unfavorable report reaching the emperor on how he was handling this troublesome Jewish community. He didn't want to lose his job, so he worked the books all night, so his name would be cleared and anyone else involved of this innocent man death.

The priests and Sanhedrin tried to smooth Pilate, “We are so glad you agreed with us, and paid those Roman soldiers to keep them quiet, and sent them away to different fronts.”

Another Sanhedrin added, “Having them sending out lies, is just perfect deceitful thinking to cover everyone’s tracks even ours.”

Eugene could not believe his ears, it was all lies compared to what he experienced in the garden, it was so untrue the story they were making up, not one word was true.

Anna’s Caiaphas son, rub his hands together with a big smirk on his face, “that would quiet and stop this madness of God coming down and dying for our sins just crazy talk... even on Passover.”

Pilate pushed them all away, as his soldier guards followed behind him, “I don’t want one more word from you about this incident. Get out of my sight.” Pilate walked down the path ringing his hands as he walked. Saying to himself, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood.’

Eugene could not believe his ears, usually if a Roman soldier falls asleep on duty, the penalty was usually death. Eugene could not believe the bribe and fear these high officers and high priests, had on their faces as they left the garden.... how could they keep silent with those lies?

Eugene waited and knowing what he saw this early morning, he got on his knees praising God, and singing as

he got ready to go home. Now, a clean man without disease, a new beginning awaits him. Praise the Lord.

**The End**

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## References

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The following books were a useful resource during the research and writing of this story.

- IVP Bible Background Commentary New Testament by Craig S Keener, Published by IVP Academic
- Life Principles Bible by Charles Stanley, published by Thomas Nelson
- MacArthur Bible Commentary by John MacArthur, Published by Nelson Reference & Electronic
- Manner & Customs of the Bible by James M Freeman, published by Whitaker House
- Who's Who in the Bible an Illustrated Biographical Dictionary by Dietrich Guren, Publications International LTD

### **Book Clubs Questions for Early Morning Miracle**

1. What was your first impression of Eugene being a leper? How would you describe him?
2. Do you think the author portrays the Crucifixion of Jesus correctly? Did you feel you were right there with Eugene?
3. Where you surprise Eugene knew a little about Jesus from other lepers and following Jesus and his followers? Why or why not?
4. Do you think Eugene following Jesus he should have been healed right away like the other lepers? Why or why not?
5. What are your thoughts about Jesus opening the tomb when it took hours for the lepers to just to close it?.
6. What do you think his uncle Jayson would think when he sees Eugene healed from his leprosy?
7. What type of employment would you see Eugene taking on how that he's healed from his leprosy?
8. How about you? Does Easter mean something new every time you celebrate it? Jesus Christ died for our sins and the victory is the empty tomb. Jesus Christ God won death over life for us. Praise the Lord
9. Are you saved? Have you taken Jesus Christ the Nazarene as your Lord and Savior? If not, why not today...Jesus Christ is waiting with open arms for you.

Thank you for reading Early Morning Miracle by Nickie Korpak. Want to read more of her books please check out her website [www.rejoicewithin.com](http://www.rejoicewithin.com). Don't forget to sign up for her monthly newsletter. Again, thank you for reading.

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