

A Risen Savior... So What?
Matthew 28:1-7
Notes

This week, this Easter morning I want to remind us of a very important truth-Jesus rose from the dead! But so, what? Why is this so important?

The resurrection of Jesus secures our faith and our resurrection to his.

Jesus resurrection is a game changer for us.

Jesus' resurrection was and is a game changer for our very lives. It may be unexpected and awkward to explain to the world, but to those who place their faith in Christ, the resurrection changes our lives.

His resurrection means that we do not have to live dead lives. Yet, many of us, if we are honest do not live in the fullness of the resurrection Jesus has secured for us.

We are called to follow Jesus; to love him; obey his commands; hunger and thirst for righteousness; rid our lives of sin; shun evil; love God with all our heart; love others as ourselves; tell others how much God loves them; share the lifesaving power of the gospel; make our lives about one thing-growing in our relationship with Christ and making him known.

We look around us and try to gauge our effectiveness, try to see what we are doing; how we are coming along in our task as disciples.

We see the world falling apart. Sin runs rampant. Pride and greed are at an all-time high. Crime is up.

We commit the murder of the unborn to the tune of over 55 million and call it "choice." Marriage is a joke with the divorce rate hovering around 52% while at the same time we are allowing the world around us to change the definition that marriage is between one man and one woman. More people are living with one another outside of marriage than ever before. Sin is openly celebrated and sold for profit.

Our churches are losing ground in the communities we serve. Churches fight and split over mostly petty issues. We are more concerned about fitting in and not causing a stir than standing up for what is right.

Liberal theology is spoken without backlash. The rise of the rock star preachers, teachers, and leaders have no fear of God and lead millions astray with unbiblical theology, all with a smile on their faces.

We are so concerned with being culturally relevant that we are not relevant for Christ at all. We lay down our bibles and daily time with God because we never have enough time, yet we seem to make time for the things we really want.

We are so consumed with pride and greed and we don't even know it. We have put the American Dream ahead of the glory of Christ in our lives. Even in poverty, we have the wealthiest families in the world.

We have everything we could ever want, yet the home is falling apart. We are more concerned about our kids' happiness than their holiness. As long as they are on every team and involved in every event it doesn't matter if they are in church or if mommy and daddy instill biblical values in their lives.

More people are on medication than ever before. Drug use, prescription medication, alcohol use, addiction, suicide, mental illnesses are all at record highs.

Beloved, I believe, I firmly believe that the reason why the world is in the shape it's in, the reason why we live like we live, why we don't live like we should is because we either have forgotten or don't truly understand and live each day reminded of what Christ did for us. WE SERVE A GOD WHO DIED AND CONQUERED DEATH FOR US SO THAT WE MIGHT KNOW ABUNDANT LIFE!

I. THE DEVOTED FOLLOWERS (MT. 28:1)

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

Now let me set the scene. The first day of the week after the Sabbath was Sunday. Jesus has been dead 3 days. But you may ask, "If he died on Friday and rose on Sunday, how is that three days?"

Well, I am glad you asked. The Jewish calendar counted a full day for any part of a day.

If he was buried on Friday afternoon-that is one day, all day Saturday-day two, and part of Sunday morning- that is day three. So, you get three days.

I find it extremely interesting that the disciples are not the ones pictured here as coming to the grave of Jesus.

No, it is not the disciples, not the closest of Jesus' followers, not the ones he spent intimate time with, not the ones you think would be there- no these are just ordinary women who have a deep love and devotion for Jesus.

You don't have to fit a certain mold to be a devoted follower of Jesus. These women were part of the low class of society, but they have the blessed opportunity to hear about the miracle of the resurrection first.

Where are all of his admirers? Where are all of those he healed? Are there only two women left?

Let us ask ourselves, did these women come to see the resurrection? No, they came to see a grave.

They did not come expecting a risen Savior; they came to anoint a corpse.

What these wonderful women lacked in faith, they made up for in devotion, love, and sympathy.

They did not fully understand Jesus' resurrection predictions, but they did show a great deal of courage.

You may be sitting here today, and you have less than a full measure of faith; you may have less than a full grasp of the miracle of the resurrection.

These two women did not have either, but they showed up. Their love and devotion to Jesus caused them to follow Jesus even to his grave and in this following, in this love; they are blessed as the first ones to hear of the glorious news.

This may be you. Do you lack faith, do you lack understanding?

I want to share with you a secret of walking with Jesus- you don't have to connect all the dots, jump through the hoops, or be the perfect person.

You simply have to have devotion and faith.

I pray that you be like these women. That even in what you lack, you would at least come to the grave with me and see, just as they did that Jesus is raised.

And in that truth, you will find the love of God, you will find forgiveness, you will find redemption, righteousness, holiness, you will find all that God intended for you in the empty tomb of Christ.

II. THE DIVINE MESSENGER (MT. 28:2-4)

And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

Guards were placed at the tomb of Jesus as well as a big stone over the entrance to his grave by the request of the priests so that the disciples could not steal the body and say that Jesus rose from the dead. Ironic huh?

"And behold!" Remember that when we read this, it is to grab our attention. *"And behold"* a great earthquake happened. And why did this earthquake happen? It was not the resurrection; it was because one of God's holy angels entered the earth realm and presented himself at the tomb of his Lord.

Now I want to make a point here. None of the Gospel writers, no human actually saw the physical resurrection. And the angel was not needed to roll the stone away so that Jesus could exit.

Have you ever seen one of those pictures with Jesus coming out of the tomb with the angel standing next to it? That is incorrect.

I don't think that if God raised Jesus from the dead that he could not roll the stone away.

The angel did not move the stone in order to let Jesus out, but in order to let the world in and see that Jesus was no longer there.

Think of the Jewish leaders. They were so confident in themselves that they had defeated this Jesus. They put a stone on his grave, put armed guards there.

All of their efforts would only validate that he was actually raised by the power of God.

And then this magnificent angel appears. His appearance is as lightening and his face as white as snow.

The earthquake, the stone being rolled away, the brilliance of the angel was too much for the guards.

They stiffened up and fell to the floor as dead men. They were frozen in fear from the glory of God's angel.

I find this truly ironic. The very guards who were to watch and make sure the dead man did not become alive, fell as dead men themselves upon the opening of the tomb of the now risen Savior.

The news of the risen Savior was so wonderful that God sent one of his holy messengers to announce it to those who would come to the grave.

And instead of seeing a corpse, they would encounter an empty tomb.

Satan thought he had won, BUT then the stone was rolled away!

III. THE DELIGHTFUL NEWS (MT. 28:5-6)

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying."

The guards passed out because they did not know the angels nor the Lord who sent them. The women were initially afraid, but their fears subsided because they knew the Lord of the angels, Jesus Christ.

The guards had reason to be afraid when Christ arose. The women did not.

Those who love Jesus and are loved by him never have reason to fear.

The angel gave them information, but he also gave them strength.

He said to them, "*do not be afraid.*" He commanded them to not be afraid and they no longer were.

I just love how God empowers us to do what he commands us to do.

The angel informs them that he knows why they have come. They have come to find a corpse, not discover a resurrection.

But the angel quickly informs them that the Jesus who had been crucified was no longer there. Notice his words, “see the place where He was lying.”

It is of great importance to understand and know that Jesus was dead when taken off the cross and placed in the tomb.

The Roman soldiers, who were experts at death, knew he was dead, that is why they did not break his legs. They stuck a spear into his side and into his heart to confirm death.

Jesus was dead. And the angel is confirming that.

We can know that Jesus died, he paid the punishment for our sin, and he was our substitute on the cross.

Now the angel has even greater news. He is breaking the game changing play to the world. We can now be assured of all of Jesus’ promises. We can know that every word he spoke was divine. We can know that he is truly the Son of God.

And this beloved, this is why we do not have to fear!

Because he is no longer dead, but he is risen! He changed the game!

The angel says, that he has risen, and to prove to you, come and see where he once lay.

Come examine for yourself the empty tomb, come feel his grave clothes, notice the stone rolled away, look at the soldiers fallen in fear; come and see that he is risen!

Oh, beloved how this is wonderful news.

Many people for the past two-thousand years have tried to prove the resurrection false due to its miraculous nature.

Many people today do not place their faith in Christ due to their doubt of the resurrection.

If that is you today, I implore you, just as the angel did with the women to take the evidence at hand, read all the accounts of the Gospels if you doubt.

Read the eyewitness accounts of the disciples on the road, of Jesus meeting them in the upper room, of him appearing to over 500 people in Galilee.

Do not allow the fear of the impossible to keep you from life everlasting.

You may want to avoid the truth of the resurrection because if the resurrection is real then that means Christ really did die for your sin.

Instead of being shamed by your sin, I want you to know this morning that Jesus willingly died for your sin so that you may be forgiven, and he conquered the grave so you may have life.

Beloved, taste and see that the Lord is good, he is alive, is offering you freedom and forgiveness. He desires to change your life. He desires God’s best for your life. He desires to free you from sin and death.

The angel declares the best news in the entire world. He is no longer in the grave, but he has risen.

So now what? What will you do with this fact? Will you accept the forgiveness offered on the cross, will you accept the everlasting life offered in the empty tomb?

Would you be willing to take upon yourself this Christian life and give God your all and in return receive forgiveness and life everlasting?

You will receive the Holy Spirit as your guide and your seal, you will receive the church as your family, and you will receive Christ as your Lord.

Jim Elliot, the martyred missionary, once said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

If you are willing to give up your life, which will fade away, and place your faith in Christ, you will gain a life which you can never lose, for heaven will be your eternal home.

The question remains: So now what? What will you do?

For the believer, how often do we live as though the resurrection is not a reality? Sure, we know it to be true, but we do not live in the power of the resurrection.

IV. THE DUTIFUL RESPONSE (MT. 28:7)

⁷"Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

The angel continues his good news, now with a command of duty.

We are saved for a purpose, to glorify God; Jesus died to bring us into relationship with God, He instructed us to tell others, but instead of telling others we simply go through the motions.

We build buildings to meet in, we sing songs to God, we have Bible studies about what He told us to do, and we even give a little money back to Him.

But is that what He told us to do? Is that the mission of the church? The church's mission is Jesus' mission: To seek and save the lost.

And instead of all the meetings, and fellowships, instead of all the songs, and all the programs, the church would do much better in fulfilling the command to go and tell if we did just that; told others of the greatness of Christ's love for them.

When was the last time we told someone Jesus loved them? That He died for them?

The women were to *"go quickly and tell that Jesus was raised from the dead."*

There was a sense of urgency of the message. Go quickly!

The disciples need to know Jesus is alive so that they can fulfill the mission he gave to them.

This message is not just for the women at the tomb. This mission and message is implanted in the heart of every believer.

We are commanded to go and tell, go and make disciples. Go and love unconditionally. Go and serve. Go and give. Go and sacrifice. Go and share the message of God's game changing event, the death and resurrection of Christ.

But many of us have never told anyone of this great news. We have never told anyone of the game changing experience in our life; of the great thing that can happen to them if they place their faith in the risen Jesus.

But what keeps us from telling this most wonderful news? What keeps us from making disciples?

Maybe for you it is pride- you do not want to be labeled a fanatic so you say nothing, maybe it is fear- you are afraid of talking of such important things, maybe you are afraid of what to say, maybe you are lazy- you don't tell because you are preoccupied with life and its business.

The angel says, "Go, I have told you the most wonderful news, share it!"

Christ commands the same in Mt. 28:18-20.

Beloved, would you share that most wonderful news? Share the news of the sinless Man, the crucified Lamb, and the risen Savior.

Our job, our mission is to go and tell about the glorious death and resurrection of Christ!

We share so that others may know about the redemption in Christ.

In Jesus' death, God reached down and scooped you up and he brought you near. In Jesus' resurrection all the bills are clear and paid.

We come to him desperate in our sin, crawling in the muck of the world. He never asks us to justify why we are so sinful; he never complains to us about us; he never compares us to Jesus.

He simply comes and pays all the bills and applies them to your account.

I should be dead. Because of my sin I should be dead. Yet, Rom. 5:8 tells me, even while I was in my sin Christ died for me.

The death of Jesus has secured for us a forgiveness of our sins. They no longer are counted against us.

The resurrection of Jesus gives us life. Jesus paid the price for your sin and mine. He gave us freedom to not be held captive to it any longer.

He has given you the command to live for him and because he has risen from the dead and given you a new life you have the power to live for him.

Jesus has come and rescued you from sin and death. Now, how will we respond?