

April 17th, 2022
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m. (Easter Sunday)

Sermon Series: Gethsemane to Glory
Sermon #3 Title: Resurrection Day
Sermon #3 Text: (Matthew 28:1-10)

A few weeks ago, we began following some of the last steps of Jesus that He spent in Israel.

- We started in Dark Gethsemane
- We watched Him between the Courtroom and the Cross.
- This morning we look at what happened in the Life of Jesus after His death.

This morning we turn our attention to the most pivotal moment in human history. Not to prove that it happened, but to learn from it, and celebrate it.

The problem is not that the Resurrection of Jesus needs to be proven; it needs to stop being denied, or ignored. Defending the fact of the resurrection is like defending the fact the sun is bright. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is as obvious as the noon day sun to the honest discernor. It takes a greater amount of energy to deny it, than it does for honest people to know it.

That being said, I have no intention this morning of spending any time proving it, but we are going to spend our time perusing it. Friend, I want to tell you this morning, “Dead Men” don’t save!

- And it is not so much that men need to be convinced, as much as it is they actually need to be converted.

- Multitudes of people know Jesus is alive, but have yet to surrender their hearts and lives to Him.

- As we look at what the Bible tells us this morning, I just want to draw your attention to the fact that admitting it is true, is not enough. – How are you responding to the fact of a living Jesus.

I. The Quietness of the Moment –

*Note – Strangely enough, the first thing we need to take note of this morning, is something that is not in the scripture! – Now we are look at the scripture, to see what is not in the scripture, and there is something powerfully worth noting.

A. The Lack of Description –

*Note – Now in the big picture of all things we note these things from the Bible.

1.) The Birth of Christ was not hidden, it was publicly available to whoever would have known enough to be there.

- We are told, not in unnecessary details, but in some general way about Christ’s birth in that cave of Bethlehem.
- certainly Mary and Joseph were there, it is no stretch to think that they may have received some extra attention or care from the Inn-Keeper.

- But at least 2 or maybe 3 people were witnesses to the baby Jesus coming into this world.

2.) The Baptism of Jesus was attended by hundreds and the guest speaker that day was God Himself.

*Note – We are certainly told about the time, the place, the person, and the process of Jesus “coming up out of the water” and the Spirit of God descending in the form of a dove, and the voice from Heaven saying – “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.” – That was one of the most publicized moments of the Lord’s earthly life!

3.) Of Course the Death of Christ was not hidden, it was a public execution with a multitude of people watching. While the scripture just say – “there they crucified Him,” – we are given a detailed description of the moment He died.

- Luke 23:46 – *“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”*

- John 19:30 – *“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”*

- Of all the things in Christ’s life we are given much detail about the process of His birth, and the process of His death.

4.) Furthermore, the very ascension of Christ into glory was witnessed in progress by His disciples, as He was taken up in a cloud.

- Acts 1:9 – *“And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.”*

- That was clearly one of the most magnificent moments in all of human history; to watch Jesus leave the ground, and ascend to heaven has to be one of the greatest privileges the disciples ever witnessed.

*Note – With all of those pivotal and imperative moments, all for the sake of human redemption, being openly described, publicly witnessed, and personally attended – that was NOT so for His resurrection.

- Chapter 27 ends with Christ in the tomb, the sepulchre is sealed, and watch is set.

- Chapter 28 opens three mornings later, with an open tomb, an empty room, unconscious guards, and two angels; one sitting on the stone, and one inside at the foot of the grave bed.

- The Lord let no one witness

- Him opening His eyes – taking a breath – standing up – folding the head cloth and laying it neatly at the foot of the bed – and calmly and majestically walking out of the grave –

What a sight would that have been!!

But - - Why? Why did the single most important moment in history happen in a cave behind a stone?

I don’t know. Except that there are some conspicuous happenings that seem to fall right in line with the process of salvation – and that’s this...

- No one would see the resurrected Christ, until they first HEARD of the Resurrected Christ.

B. The Light on the News – The truth of the resurrection would be disseminated then, just as it is now. First by Word of Mouth.

- 1.) The Angels told the Women – then they saw Him.
- 2.) The Women told the Disciples – then they saw Him.
- 3.) The Disciples told Thomas – and then, only when he returned to stay with disciples, did he get to see Him.

*Note – May I say this to you, the Lord's economy is now, as it has always been – You will HEAR the Word, before you see the Lord.

- God has always required man to "Believe Him" whether they have "evidence" or not.

- (The Bible says in dark black ink on bright white paper, "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar." – 1st John 5:10

Only once the News was out to be heard, did Jesus make Himself available to be seen!

- The Word Got out that the WORD got out.

*Note – I want to give you a Bible long principle that is more fixed than simple math. Friend you will submit to what He says, before you can know what He does. – All things begin and end with you taking Christ at His Word.

II. The Gentleness of that Morning – (vs 1-2)

*Note – All four gospels record the quiet gentleness of that morning. The details not given behind the stone, are certainly give around it. These are the things the Lord wants you to know about that day.

A. The Setting of It – "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

*Note – Just notice that Matthew begins his telling of the story, right after sundown on Saturday!

- For the Jews, the first day of the week, began at sundown on Saturday.

1. – The Day to Note -

a. - Matthew starts his narrative at the earliest possible moment to set this day in motion. – When the sun went down on Saturday, it was time to start talking about Sunday.

b. – Mark tells us - "when the Sabbath was past..."

c. – Luke and John just skip the sabbath mention altogether, and just start with "the first day of the week."

*Note – (For your reference – this is exactly the reason the Lord's church is to meet on Sunday. – Our Spiritual Lives only EXIST because of the Resurrection of Jesus on this day, therefore our Daily Lives will be ANCHORED to day of Worship in His church every time there is a Sunday.)

2. – The Time of Day to Note –

a. – "as it began to dawn" – says Matthew

b. – "very early in the morning" – says Mark and Luke

c. – "while it was yet dark" – say John

*Note – When you put all of the gospels together this group of women mentioned would travelling from Bethany. Bethany is about 2 miles from Jerusalem, and the road was not level or smooth. No doubt the group wanted to be there by sunrise.

- That being said, these women set out in the dark quiet stillness of the morning, steadily moving from darkness to daylight in more ways than one.

- that they might go and care for a “Dead Jesus”

*Note – In their mind they weren’t going to meet the Living Lord, they were going to minister oil and spices to a dead Jesus.

(- Here’s a small but noticeable irony – they rose early, heavy with grief, and motivated by love to go minister to a dead Jesus; and yet there are millions who know better, that still won’t bow to the Living Lord!)

- That was the setting of it –

B. The People of It –

*Note – The gospels list 3 women by name, but it would not be unreasonable to think there were more.

- 1.) Mary Magdalene
- 2.) Mary the mother of James
- 3.) Salome
- 4.) Joanna
- 5.) “the other Mary” may reference the mother of James, or another one perhaps Mary the mother of Jesus.

*Note – There are two Wonderfully Worthy thoughts to consider here.

#1 – In God’s Divine Design, Why God Chose These Women?

#2 – In God’s Divine Design How God Moved These Women?

#1 – Why did God choose these women to be the first witnesses to the risen Lord? – I don’t know exactly why He chose these women, but I can certainly see the results of Him choosing these women.

- 1.) - They were the last ones to leave the cross,
- They were the ones who accompanied the body to the tomb,

- they were the last witnesses to the fact that Jesus was in fact dead!

*note – There was no one more credible to be the first to say He was alive, than the last who certified that He was DEAD!

“If the Coroner that pronounced Him dead and buried, was the first to say He’s alive and walking, I assure you, he would have your attention.”

- they stayed with Jesus longer than the disciples did
- they ministered to Jesus longer than the disciples did
- they were publicly with Him in the presence of the mania, longer than the disciples were.
- they would have the high privilege of being the first witnesses to the Risen Lord!

#2 – The Second Thought here is, is that In God’s Divine Design HOW He moved these women!

- If this does anything else, it should underscore for you the magnitude of detail, and depth of sovereign movement from time immemorial about God’s work on that day.

- Why were these women coming to the tomb in the first place? – To bring oil and spices in care for the body. To keep it clean, and perfumed that it might “decay with dignity”.

(Typically, this would have been done upon the burial, but because of the timing of it, they could not!)

*Note – Now here is one of those unsaid, unwritten, implications that is worthy of our attention.

- Christ was crucified, “On time!”
- He was born when the fulness of time had come.

- He was crucified at the hour of His choosing.
- He died at the moment of His decision
- He set the rules for burial long before He died.

*Note – In other words, it was by the Lord’s Word to the Jews that the dead was to be buried before the sundown on the preparation for the sabbath.

John 19:31 – *“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.”* – Of course they got that from Deuteronomy 21:23

- He was crucified and buried at just the right time to keep them from ministering to the body with their oils and spices.... (Why? – so they would have a reason to come to the garden the day after the sabbath!)

*note – Friend, that time between dawn and sunrise, when a small group of women walked gently through the countryside to minister to the body of a dead man had been orchestrated by God even from the book of Deuteronomy.

(*Note – Note this planning. – In Exodus 12:6, the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed “in the evening.” – Many Jewish scholars tell us that this was “between the 9th hour (3pm) and sunset.

- In Deuteronomy, a dead body could not remain hanging on a tree after sunset.

- All of that being said, the Lord set the rules. Die at 3 p.m. be buried before the end of the day, which was viewed as being around 6 pm.

- The Lord fixed it so they wouldn’t have enough time to take Him down from the cross, wash the body, spice the body, anoint the body, and duly wrap the body before sundown. – So they would come back to the tomb on Sunday morning.

The Quietness of the Moment – The Gentleness of the Morning -

III. The Holiness of the Messenger – vs 2-5

*Note – Matthew is the only one who explains to us what happened to the soldiers and the stone...

*Note – I have never seen the angel of the Lord, but I’ve read enough about Him to shake. Matthew tells us about:

- “Always remember this – Angels are as natural as trees, and trees are as supernatural as angels.”

A. His Overwhelming Power – (vs 2)

- 1.) To Shake the Earth – “And behold there was a great earthquake...”

*Note – Here’s something worthy to note. The Greek word for Earthquake actually encompasses more than an earthquake. – It is the word “Seismos” that means both an earthquake, and a tempest, or commotion.

- a.) All that means, is that when this angel descended, it wasn’t just that the ground shook, but there was movement in the atmosphere. – Maybe a sudden burst of wind in the stillness of the morning.

*Note – We note there was an earthquake at the crucifixion. There is an earthquake at the resurrection. The earth knows its Maker. – All things are held together by His Word. (Hebrews 1:3)

- When He died, the Word went silent, the ground shook.
- When He awakened, the Word arose, the ground shook.
- *Note – Here’s the beautiful sovereignty of Jesus as Maker, and Sustainer.
- He could tell waves of Water to stop – and they would.
- He could tell waves of Dirt to start – and they would.
- He would tell the wind at sea to be stop – and it would.
- He could tell the wind to burst forth on still and dark morning – and it would.
- He can walk on water, and create waves on land – the only ORDER in nature is His Order. Life arose from Death!

2.) To Move the Stone – “and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.” – Never so Jesus could get out, but so that all could get in.

*Note – Here’s the short of it...

- Man has no authority, or ability, over the will and work of God.

B. His Overpowering Presence – (vs 3-4)

- 1.) His Fiery Countenance – “like lightening”
- 2.) His Fearful Appearance – “the keepers did shake and become as dead men.”

*Note – The angel of the Lord, let these soldiers see with their eyes, what they were dealing with.

- They saw him in his heavenly glory, and witnessed him roll the stone back, and then take a seat on top of it.
- And that was enough to make the most ardent soldier pass out because of fear.

(Now when you bring in the rest of the gospels, all of this happened prior to the women’s arrival at the tomb.)

One of the greatest mysteries to me is what happened to these soldiers.

- If the Disciples would die for what they knew to be true, why would such strong soldiers not be so convinced as well that they too should be emboldened to tell the story.

- We know some of them were bought off, “for a while.”

*Note – a few things to remember, and surmise...

1.) I believe these were not Roman guards, but Temple guards.

- When Pilate said, “You have a guard,” I believe he was telling them to use their own guard.

- Primarily because the Jewish priests would not be able to protect Roman soldiers from an angry Pontius Pilate.

2.) But – remember this...

- only SOME of the guards were bought off –
- and only someONE who was actually there, could have relayed to Matthew the truth of what happened.

- Only a guard who was there, could have relayed the truth about what happened.

- The Holiness, the Righteousness, and the Presence of the angel of the Lord, and the emptiness of the tomb either “Converted them” to the Lord, or “Concreted them” in defiance.

C. His Overflowing Peace – vs 5

*Note – But note this. While the angel was more than content to scare the watchers to death, he spoke pure peace to the women.

- 1.) “Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified, (Luke tells us he then said)

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen.”

*Note – There would be nothing but fear for the enemies of Christ, and there would be nothing but peace offered to the ones searching for Christ.

- The same angel that terrified the enemies, pacified the women.

*Now that being said, the Resurrection of Jesus does the very same thing today.

- It ought to terrify the enemies of Christ
- It ought to electrify the converted to Christ

Those who would remain in rebellion to Jesus should at least be awakened to the fact that He is alive, and He is coming to remove them from His presence, and seal them into the eternal prison of hell itself.

Those would cry to Him for redemption, and bow to Him in submission, should be awakened to the fact that there is nothing but GRACE, GLORY, and Goodness out front.

- The presence of the angel of the Lord, and the fact of the Risen Christ had two different effects on two different kinds of people. Some were scared to death, and some were awakened to life!

IV. The Worthiness of the Message – vs 6-8 - **Read**

Conclusion: - NOW WHAT – “I have told you, He is Alive” What are you going to do with that? – You will either do SOMETHING, or you will do NOTHING, and the only SOMETHING that matters, is to abandon this life for His Life!