

Risen
Matthew 28:1-10,16-20
April 17, 2022

Last Sunday Paul explained that grief will be experienced by believers while pointing out that believers should grieve differently from non-believers because of Christ. Paul encouraged the believers to expect to be reunited forever with their deceased Christian loved ones in the Lord's presence following Christ's return.

Today, as we study Matthew's writing of the resurrection of Christ, we see why the truths and the hope Paul wrote about in 1 Thessalonians are real and should be expected by believers. Just as Jesus had told his disciples that he would die and then be raised after three days, we have His promise of eternal life. That is the promised hope of believers.

It's a celebration! **What occasions do we celebrate?** Some folks are ready to celebrate at the drop of a hat. Graduation is coming and there is always celebration (perhaps relief) with that milestone. Retirement, anniversaries, and of course birthdays are causes for celebration. Today's study focuses on a notable event with eternal impact on all humanity and is most worthy of celebration: the resurrection of Jesus. We celebrate Christ's resurrection because that assures believers of salvation.

Read Matthew 28:1-4 "Resurrected"

We know the story leading up to Matthew 28. The crucifixion was done. His tomb had been sealed. Those who wanted Jesus dead thought they were rid of this troublesome preacher. They failed to understand He had the power to fulfill His promises.

Most of us have studied the resurrection many times and from four Gospel writers. **Why do you think we see slight variations in the different accounts of the resurrection?** Minor variations are typical in eyewitness testimony. Exact or identical stories would look suspicious, perhaps made up so all would tell the same story. Although there are minor differences in perspective, the Gospel accounts are consistent.

What was significant about the angel's appearance? Lightning is often associated with God's presence. Clothes "white as snow" suggests a messenger carrying the glory and authority of God. The angel's appearance left no doubt that this was a supernatural messenger.

Why did the angel remove the stone? Well, it wasn't so Jesus could get out! Jesus was already gone. The angel rolled away the stone so the women could see in and actually enter the tomb.

How did the guards react to the earthquake and the angel? Look at verse 4, "The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men." They must have been petrified and absolutely useless toward their assignment.

Read Matthew 28:5-7 "Announced"

So, as we just noted, the guards are petrified and powerless in the face of true power. The women, however, found no fear in God's power and did not flee in fear. In fact, the angel comforted them as they were about to receive their instructions from God.

What might the angel's message "He is not here" mean? The angel's statement could have meant the body has been moved, or you are at the wrong tomb. Imagine the thoughts that might have been going through the women's minds.

What is the significance of the angel's next statement, "For He has risen, just as he said?" This is the fulfillment of God's promise. "He is risen" makes all the difference, without it this would be just another story.

As we discussed at the beginning of class, the resurrection of Jesus is, without doubt, the most notable event with eternal impact on all humanity and is most worthy of celebration. The announcement of Christ's resurrection simply confirmed that God was still at work.

Why did the angel tell the women to "Come and see the place where he lay?" The angel's message could certainly be believed with the evidence of the stone, the petrified guards, and his appearance. He was wanting these women to become eyewitnesses to the empty tomb. We, people of today, needed them to see for themselves that He has risen and that this promised miracle was accomplished by God's power.

Why was verse 7 two-fold instructions? First, they were to tell the disciples "He has risen from the dead." Actually, this was fantastic news and I doubt the women needed to be told to "go quickly" and tell the others. So, once the disciples were told "He is risen" and they have a minute to recover from the shock of that news, their next thoughts are going to be, "where is He" and "what do we do now?" Fortunately, the angel told them the second part of their instructions, "He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there."

Why was this instruction so important? The angel had announced the resurrection, and Jesus would confirm it by meeting His disciples. I am reminded of the story of General Eisenhower near the end of World War II when American soldiers were freeing the Jews from the concentration camps. General Eisenhower wanted pictures taken of the atrocities because no one would ever believe this could happen. The disciples would confirm that it was Jesus and ask whatever they wanted to know. Although we do not have pictures, we do have eyewitness accounts from many who saw Jesus after His crucifixion.

Read Matthew 28:8-10 "Encountered"

The women left quickly to tell the disciples what they had seen. **What does "departing quickly," "with fear and great joy" indicate?** I expect their minds and conversations were bouncing from fear to joy, back to fear, and back to joy. They were excited, to say the least and perhaps talking nonstop. Both fear and joy at the same time could indicate they knew something wonderful had happened and that things would never be the same.

What was the purpose of their encounter with Jesus? Jesus could have taken care of the "go and tell" without telling these women to do it. Many of us long for a purpose. We want to do things that have meaning. Jesus brought these women into this story by telling them to "go and tell". They suddenly had ownership of the events. They had an important purpose and couldn't wait to obey Jesus.

One of our authors said, "Purpose and meaning can be found in living according to the truth God gives us in His Word." Today, our encounters with Jesus can certainly bring purpose and meaning to our lives.

Read Matthew 28:16-20 "Commissioned"

"Some doubted," so is that okay? I think so particularly when you are struggling to understand or respond to something. I wonder how many folks became believers after Thomas was convinced. Some folks are quick to believe while some respond more slowly, or hesitate in taking a particular action. Don't we see that in our world today? Many folks have a hesitant faith, perhaps overthinking God's call, rather than graciously responding to the Holy Spirit.

There are a lot of inner workings in these verses. **What are the two assurances in verses 18 and 20?** "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." "And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age." When Jesus tells you "I am with you always," that makes you wonder why you doubted so long.

What is the single command in verse 19? "Make disciples."

What are the three instructions regarding making disciples? 1. Go: share the good news and urge others to follow Jesus. 2. Baptizing: the act of immersion indicates death and burial of one's former life and a resurrection to follow and identify with Jesus. 3. Teaching: helping disciples grow in the Lord.

Summary: Christ's resurrection assures believers of salvation.

- The empty tomb attests to Jesus' resurrection.
- The angel declared Jesus' resurrection.
- Eyewitness accounts affirm Jesus' resurrection.
- The spread of the gospel demonstrates the truth of the resurrection of Jesus.