

Mark 16:1-8

“The Resurrection”

Today brings us to a text that we should be careful to never become desensitized to due to familiarity. It's the account that we've all heard time and time again yet with each reminder our hearts should well up and overflow with praise toward God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's the culmination of the Christian faith; it's the premise upon which our faith is predicated. Many people believe that our faith culminates at the cross, that's not true. As incredible as the work of the cross was/is; the fact that it was there that Jesus was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. It was there that somehow and in some way God took all of our sin, all of our shame, every “white lie” and every indescribable atrocity of humanity throughout all of human history and placed it on Christ that He might shed His blood and absorb in Himself the penalty that was due us. Yet it would all count for *nothing* apart from the resurrection. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said, “...*if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!*” 1 Cor 15:17

The resurrection substantiates every claim that Christ made and separates Him from every other “religious leader” that's ever lived. People want to know, “What is it that separates Jesus? How do we know *He* was right as opposed to any other religious leader throughout history?” The answer lies in the fact of the resurrection; Buddha is dead, Confucius is dead, Muhammad is dead, Jesus *was* dead but He *is* alive. He said, “*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*” Rev 1:18 Which is to say that death didn't conquer Him, He conquered and rules over death. Apart from the resurrection the work of the cross would've been in vain. Because a dead Savior can't save anyone; if you're in jeopardy you need someone living and readily available to help you. The same is true spiritually; if salvation is to visit you, if you're to be rescued from the snare of sin and death you need a Savior who is living and readily available to help you. It's the resurrection that verifies and testifies of the fact that Jesus is exactly who He said He is (Rom 1:4) and that His sacrifice upon the cross was sufficient to meet every demand of God's justice toward our sin. If the sacrifice wasn't sufficient then Jesus would've remained in the grave, but when He rose on the 3rd day that was the verification that God received His sacrifice as payment in full.

If the cross is the payment then the resurrection is the receipt, it's the verification of the fact that the payment has been made... Here we are at the end of tax season and so many of us have been reminded exactly how important receipts can be. You may've paid for all sorts of things, but if you don't have a receipt for it the tax man isn't interested is he? There's nothing to substantiate your claim therefore it's dismissed as valid. The receipt furnishes proof of purchase; the resurrection furnishes the proof that Jesus paid the purchase price of our redemption.

When we left off last time you recall it was at the somber scene whereby the ladies were observing where Jesus was laid... He had been tried, crucified, and He had died by 3:00 pm Friday afternoon. I mentioned the fact that I might talk a little more about His death today because some have questioned whether or not He truly died. However I'm not going to entertain that too much because it's just a ludicrous notion to entertain.

Roman soldiers knew death when they saw it, Pilate verified His death, they weren't about to let Him be taken from that cross if He wasn't dead. He was dead. If you believe in the "swoon" theory, that Jesus didn't really die, but rather He *swooned* on the cross and 3 days in the tomb was a period of resting and regaining strength to pull off the greatest hoax in history I'd encourage you to try and repeat it. Allow yourself to be beaten beyond recognition, directly following that be tied to a post and have a cat of 9 tails (with bone and lead embedded in the strands) flailed full force across your back until it looks like *not* individual stripes but one open and quivering mass of bleeding flesh. Have a crown of thorns beat down on your head with a reed, then carry a 100 lb cross beam even just a few blocks, be taken and nailed to a cross in a contorted position so that you can't breathe and your bones are pulled out of joint. Hang there for about 6 hours in a state of hypovolemic shock with fluid filling up in the sac around your heart and lungs, and then before you're taken down have a spear thrust through your side piercing your lungs and your heart so that blood and water comes out, be wrapped from head to toe in linen for 3 days, then tell me how you feel... Jesus was dead when He was taken from the cross.

Joseph of Arimathea came and taking courage He asked Pilate for the body of Christ. Even in that there are 2 different words employed by Joseph and Pilate. When Joseph asks for the body he uses a term that indicates respect. When Pilate grants him the body, the word that Pilate uses just means "carcass" or "corpse," there was no question that Jesus was dead or else he wouldn't have allowed Him to be taken down...

But Joseph was done being a secret servant, He wasn't going to be a *closet Christian* anymore, no longer would he be ashamed of Christ crucified. He would stake his identity with Jesus; we know from John's gospel that Nicodemus (who'd also come to Jesus secretly by night) joined Joseph at this point in preparing the body of Jesus for burial. They had to act fast because sundown was approaching, the Sabbath was upon them and they couldn't work on the Sabbath so they did sort of a *rush job* preparing His body.

We can't help but wonder what was going through the minds of these teachers of Israel, these men learned in the scriptures who had come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and now they were taking Him from the cross, washing the blood from His body and wrapping Him in fine linen. As they pulled the nails from His wrists and feet we wonder if Ps 22 flash through their minds... "*For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;*" Ps 22:16 As they observed the wound from the spear in His side, the bruises all over His body, the massive laceration that His back had become due to the scourging did they think of Isaiah 53? "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we*

are healed.” Isa 53:5 They themselves being wealthy, as they prepared His tomb perhaps the scripture came to them, *“And they made His grave with the wicked — But with the rich at His death,” Isa 53:9* Were they anticipating the resurrection? I don’t know; what I do know is that those women who observed where they laid Him did not.

When Christ died that day their hopes died with Him. Ch 15 leaves 2 women staring through tear filled eyes at the tomb in which Jesus was laid. That’s something else that we’re thankful for, they didn’t just leave the cross after Christ had died; they watched carefully what was done with His body. That tells us that they knew where they were going Sunday morning.

They didn’t by chance visit the wrong tomb or become confused as to where He was supposed to be, they personally observed where He was taken and in what tomb He was placed. The ladies were the last to leave and the 1st to arrive Sunday morning, but when they arrived that morning at the tomb, they were in no way anticipating what awaited them, notice.

Vs1

As we mentioned Jesus died on a Friday afternoon. When the sun went down that evening it was officially the Sabbath. You recall that the Jews didn’t recognize days like the Romans, rather than a day being from sun up to sun up, they recognized days being from sundown to sundown. So when the sun went down Friday evening Friday was over and Saturday (the Sabbath day) had begun and would last through sundown the next day. Of course that’s how we get 3 days from Friday to Sunday, Jesus died on Friday (that’s day 1) when the sun went down that was the start of day 2, and when the sun went down Saturday evening then it was day 3 so when the women came to the tomb early Sunday morning Jesus of course was gone having been raised from the dead. But they couldn’t do anything that would’ve been considered labor on the Sabbath so they had to wait until it was over Saturday evening to buy oils and spices so as to go and follow through on the rush job that Joseph and Nicodemus had begun Friday afternoon. They wanted Jesus to receive an appropriate burial but because they were so rushed on Friday there was simply no time for that.

So they waited until the Sabbath was over to buy spices but they had to wait until 1st light Sunday morning to go ahead and anoint the Lord’s body because when the Sabbath was ended there was no light to see by. So we read in Vs 2

Vs2

We gather from other gospel accounts that they evidently headed out while it was still dark knowing that by the time they reached the tomb the sun would be up. and I think it’s worth noting that these women didn’t wait until midmorning, or sometime in the afternoon, they didn’t put it off until it was convenient for them, they wanted to honor the Lord and in so doing they made this the priority of their day from earliest possible moment that they could.

Here’s what I’m saying; because they *loved* Him, and wanted to somehow *honor* Him they gave the very 1st fruits of their day, of their time, and of their efforts and energies *to* Him. When you *love* the Lord you will want to make a priority *of* the Lord. Will we fail in it, or ever fall short of it? Absolutely; but let’s not justify it. We need to be convinced; concretely resolved in our heart that Jesus is worthy of our 1st fruits. Jesus is worthy to be the very highest priority

of your life. How appropriate it would be if every day before our feet hit the floor we took the time to acknowledge the Lord and give our day *to* the Lord. If before we left for work we were able to spend a little time in His word receiving strength and nourishment for our inner man, receiving this day our “daily bread” so to speak. Jesus said, *“I am the bread of life.” John 6:48* When He was speaking to the Jews He said, *“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” John 6:49-51*

It’s interesting that throughout the days of the wilderness wanderings that the manna was provided for them *early in the morning*, and if they waited for the heat of the day to seek it out it was gone. “Are you saying that God will only speak to me in the morning?” No, I’m saying that He’s deserves to have that place of priority, He’s worthy to receive the 1st fruits of our time and we do well to make a priority out of seeking Him and looking to receive *from* Him through His word, and time spent in prayer...They went to the tomb notice *very early* in the morning. Honoring the Lord was their main priority.

Think about it, these ladies were depressed, they were discouraged, they felt defeated and they rose early expecting to find nothing more than the dead body of Jesus... How much more than should *we* be willing to make of priority of seeking the risen and living Lord? Not out of obligation, but out of the incredible opportunity that’s available to you and me? Hey, maybe you feel like you’re in the dark right now... be like these women, place the priority on seeking Jesus, they were the 1st ones to see “the light” to receive the word, the revelation of the resurrection. Why? Because they prioritized seeking after and serving the Lord.

Vs3-4

You get the idea...they were walking with their heads down wondering who was going to take care of rolling that stone away because it was so heavy (the upwards of a couple of tons). Evidently they were unaware that Pilate had stationed Roman Guards there and placed a Roman seal on the tomb as well because the religious leaders petitioned him lest the disciples steal the body and start a rumor that He had risen. To break the Roman seal was the share the fate of crucifixion (just another piece of evidence that no one was getting in there with out going through those guards who were there to guard it with their lives). That’s why they freaked out when the angel appeared and rolled back the stone (the bible tells us that they shook for fear and became like dead men). After they fled they reported what had happened to the chief priests and they paid them to say that they disciples stole the body and if the word got back to the governor they’d pay him off as well so that they (the soldiers) wouldn’t die.

But the ladies were worried about rolling back the stone, however when they looked up it was already rolled away. Now I think it’s important to observe something here, we’ve already mentioned it but bear with me for a minute. When Jesus died on Friday their hopes died with Him, as far as they were concerned it was game over, He was gone. Friday evening, all throughout the Sabbath and the next night they weren’t thinking, “Man I wish Sunday would

hurry up and get here because then we'll see Him again!" They had absolutely no anticipation of the resurrection, these last few days have felt like an eternity to them. If they were expecting Him to rise again they wouldn't have worried about where they laid Him, they wouldn't have bought spices for His body, they wouldn't have been worried about who was going to roll away the stone. They'd have headed for Galilee where He said that He would meet them. Instead they expected to find the body of Christ, beginning to decompose and they were wanting to get the spices in there so as to help offset the stench. They had no expectation, no anticipation of meeting the risen Lord.

Question, when you come here the 1st day of the week, do you have *any expectation, any anticipation* of meeting the risen Lord?

Or do you anticipate things being pretty much exactly as you expected with regards to nothing being really any different when you leave than when you came, you don't anticipate having an up close and personal encounter with God. You don't expect the Lord to move in a powerful or profound way in your life personally...not really. God wants to meet with you, the question is do you really want to meet with Him?

Their chief worry, the primary anxiety that morning was "who will roll away the stone for us?" In reality it was a completely unfounded worry wasn't it? It would prove to be something futile to worry about and yet that's the very nature *of worry*; a useless expenditure of time and energy. Because whatever stone seems to be your problem *personally*, whatever you're up against that seems to be an *impossibility* if you've walked with the Lord for much time at all you've no doubt discovered that generally by the time you get *to* it He's gone before you *in* it and the stone has been rolled away. You spun your wheels and worried needlessly because in reality God took care of it. How much time we spend worrying about what might be a problem that often times proves to not be a problem at all because God deals with it for us. The bible teaches us to be anxious for nothing, Jesus said that worry won't help anything, we're to let our requests be made known to God through prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and let the peace of God safeguard our heart and mind through Christ Jesus. In **Prov 3:5-6** we read it like this, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*"

Now before we move on we need to acknowledge the obvious, that stone was not rolled away to let Jesus *out*. Can you imagine Jesus pacing back and forth waiting on the angel to let Him out. No, the resurrection body doesn't have the limitations that this body has. We know that Jesus walked through walls after the resurrection so this tomb didn't present a problem. The stone was rolled away to let others *in* so that they could bear an eye witness account to the reality of the resurrection. Ear witnesses don't hold up in a court of law, eye witnesses do.

Vs5-7

We know from the other gospel records that this young man was in fact an angel. Luke tells us there were 2 of them, Mark evidently focuses on the one who was vocal. But when they looked in there they were alarmed (the word speaks of terror mingled with amazement) it scared

them, they didn't know what was going on, Jesus wasn't there, this young guy was there they thought perhaps he'd moved Jesus' body, they're just freaking out... Look at Vs 6 (read)

There is so much in this Vs and I know that we won't do it justice but you guys this is the good news, this is the gospel message. "Jesus of Nazareth *was* crucified, but *is* risen." and He calls them to be eye witnesses of its reality, "Come and see it, be assured of it, then go and tell everyone about it." That's the way it's to be for you and me as well, we're to be assured *about* it, be convinced through personal experience of the reality *of* it, then go and proclaim it. We're to be a people who get the gospel out, Jesus was dead, He died on the cross for your sin and for mine, but being Himself sinless death couldn't maintain its hold on Him He's alive and seated in power at the right hand of God whereby He extends the offer of salvation and forgiveness *to* us and ever lives to make intercession on behalf *of* us. We're not far from finished but I want to take a moment to emphasize the "was/is" aspect of the angel's declaration.

Jesus *was* dead, He *is* risen! He's become the 1st fruits of the resurrection, His body was somehow, in some way transformed from the earthly to the heavenly, from corruptible to incorruptibility, same body but now changed. Out of the bulb planted into the beautiful flower that springs forth (so to speak) (of course you can read 1st Cor 15 for more information on the resurrection body) but I point that out because people had been brought forth from the dead before Jesus. Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, however they were what we might call resuscitated, they were dead and brought back to life. However they would die again, their body would see corruption. Not so with Christ, He wasn't resuscitated, He was resurrected, the body that though somehow related to the one we have presently (Jesus' body wasn't in that tomb) will be changed and fit for eternity.

But here's the deal, God wants to work a *was/is* testimony in you as well. He wants the testimony in your life that says, "he/she *was* dead in sin, but now he/she *is* alive to God in Christ." He wants the power of the resurrection to be a working reality in your life. You can have that before you leave here today through simply surrendering your heart to Him.

Now before we move on I want to quickly make mention of the commendation that the angel gives to them. Did you see it there? Vs 6, "You seek Jesus" what a great thing to have acknowledged of you. Question, what are *you* seeking? Looking for a better career, higher rung on the corporate ladder, a different relationship to get away from the problems of your present one? I'm just going to tell you, you can drink of those waters but you'll thirst again. They're all a temporary fix to a permanent problem. Jesus is the One who fills the void in the human heart, He's the One who bridges the gap between God and man, who forgives our sin and makes us whole. What you need isn't what you think you need, it'll never satisfy. What you need is to be made new and that (my friends) can happen only in Christ, seek Jesus. I'll guarantee you that when you seek Him He'll be found by you when you seek Him with all your heart. Come and see; go and tell.

Vs8

Overwhelmed with reverential fear and reduced to silence. They said nothing to anyone, we're to say something to everyone. Christ is risen, your redemption is secure in Him and there is no other name given among men under heaven by which we *must* be saved.

Now, we skipped over a little something in Vs 7 didn't we? Did you catch the detail? The angel told her to go and tell His disciples -- and Peter. Why did Peter get the special mention? Because as you know Peter had failed Him so deeply, undoubtedly he felt so unworthy, Jesus wanted him to know that He wanted to meet with Him specifically. He had a special plan of restoration and forgiveness for him personally. Sure the invitation to meet with Christ went out to all generally, but to the one who failed Him the most He sent out a personal invitation specifically.

Here's what I'm saying. Maybe that's you, maybe you've at one time accepted the Lord but to be quite honest you've walked away from the Lord and in your heart you feel like there's really no chance of restoration now, not after what you've done, you've blown it too bad. The Lord would have you to know that He has a special/personal offer of forgiveness and restoration for you today. Sure there's an invitation to all of us generally, but to you specifically He extends Himself personally.

Jesus has a tender touch of restoration waiting for you, and an incredible offer of salvation for any who may've never received Him, maybe you've never opened your heart to Him, you're dead in sin. Jesus wants to make you alive in Him today. Isn't the grace of God a beautiful thing? Give way to the power of the resurrection in your life today, let God change you, have His way *in* you, that He might be glorified *through* you to the praise of His name!

Prayer Points:

Jesus You were crucified, You are glorified and we praise Your name. Your tender mercies are overwhelming how You reach out *to* us and are always ready to receive us no matter where we've been or what we've done. Such love is too high for us, it's difficult for us to absorb Your goodness, yet we thank You *for* it, we're humbled *by* it and we ask You to use our lives, sanctify us that You might be glorified through us.

God wants to glorify Himself in you, 1st and foremost the way He wants to do that is to make you a testimony of His grace. It's by grace that we're saved, if you've never received the saving grace of God then let me encourage you to do that today. It doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done if you're willing to open your heart to Jesus Christ then He will come into you, forgive you and make you brand new. He wants to fill the void and give you everlasting life, are you open to Him today?