

Matthew 28:1-10 The Significance of the Resurrection

Okay we are in Matthew chapter 28. That is our next study in the order of the series we are in. We have been in the Gospel of Matthew for several years. We are in the final chapter, Matthew 28. This morning verses 1 through 10. It is the fifth and final section of Matthew.

Chapters 26 and 27 was The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 28 is The Resurrection of Christ.

Matthew chapter 28 deals with the events and circumstances surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Remember that He has been crucified. And Joseph of Arimathea came and we know from the other Gospel writers Nicodemus came with him. They received permission from Pilate to take the body of Jesus and they laid Him in Joseph's tomb. It was a new tomb, one in which no one had ever been laid before. And he rolled the stone over the door of the tomb.

Remember not only was the stone placed in front of the entrance of the tomb, but the government gave the Jewish leaders permission to place Roman guards in front of the tomb. They also put a rope across the door of the tomb in an X shape and they put a seal right in the middle of the ropes. So if that seal was broken it would mean that somebody was tampering with the tomb.

Our text tells us now, chapter 28, the resurrection of Christ, subtitle is The Proof of the Resurrection. In the entire chapter Matthew presents The Proof of the Resurrection. In verses 1 through 8, The Place where Jesus was Lying. That is our focus - is on the tomb this morning.

Matthew 28 verses 1 to 4, The Circumstances. There are four things. First of all, **Now after the Sabbath at the dawning toward the first of the week, Mary the Magdalene and the other Mary came to view the tomb.** It was is after the Sabbath that is on Saturday, *dawning toward the first part of the week*, that would be early Sunday morning. The Gospel John tells us it is still dark, early Sunday morning. He focuses on two women, even though there were more women there. Mary the Magdalene, notice the definite article *the*, *Magdalene* is not her last name. Magdalene is the town from which she was from, Magdala. She was Mary the Magdalene. **And the other Mary came to view the tomb.**

Verse 2, **And, behold! A great earthquake happened! For an angel of the Lord had descended out of Heaven and after he had come, he rolled away the stone from the door and was sitting upon it.** That little word *for* is an explanatory conjunction describing this great earthquake, what caused it. A great earthquake took place. And what caused the earthquake was the angel of the Lord descended out of Heaven, had come, and he rolled away the stone from the door and was sitting upon the stone.

And the appearance of him was as lightning and his clothing white as if snow. And the ones keeping guard were shaken from the fear of him, and they became as if dead. Now it is interesting, it says in verse 4 that they were shaken. That is the word **σεισμός** (seismos).

The same word used for *earthquake* in verse 2; where we get our term *seismology* from, the study of the earth shaking. **The guards were shaken from the fear of him, and they became as if dead.** Very important the literal translation is, *as if dead*; not as dead, but as if dead. They were not dead, they were in shock.

And then verses 5 and 6, The Contents of the Tomb. **But when Angel responded he said to the women, You yourselves.** Notice, literally, he is pointing out them, nobody else, just you yourselves. **You yourselves do not fear, for I know that you seek Jesus, the One who has been crucified.** So he was talking to the women about you yourselves do not fear. He is not including the soldiers and the others around the tomb. He is speaking to the women themselves.

I know that you are seeking Jesus, the One who has been crucified. He is not here, for He was raised according as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord was lying. Interesting that the angel tells them not to be afraid and tells them two things, which are very important. Number one, that the Lord was raised from the dead as He said. And the second thing he did was invite the women in to see what happened. Enter in and see.

Come see the place where the Lord was lying. So he actually showed them proof. They actually went inside the tomb to see that the body was gone. They also saw other things in the tomb, which is what we are going to highlight this morning. It does not tell us what they saw. It does not tell us that they did not see Jesus. It did not tell us what they saw in the tomb. But John does. Turn in your study guide to page 4, we have John chapter 20 verses 1 through 10. His ministry concerning the resurrection of Christ.

Now on the first of the week comes Mary Magdalene - early - it yet being dark, to the tomb, and she sees the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So the earthquake had happened, the angel had descended, and the angel is sitting on the stone tomb door. **Therefore she runs and comes to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved - that would be the apostle John himself who wrote the book - and says to them, "They took away the Lord from out of the tomb, and we do not know where they laid Him."** Therefore went out Peter and the other disciple, again being John, and they were coming toward the tomb. **And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and he came first of the tomb.** Sort of a little humor that the apostle John puts into the Scriptures. He is talking about him running faster than Peter and he got there first.

And after having stooped down, he sees the linen cloths lying; however he did not enter in. Interesting, in verse 5 the New American Standard Bible translates it *linen wrappings*, which is more literal. I think that is very interesting. The linen wrappings, he sees them, however, he did not enter in. There are probably two reasons why he did not enter in. Number one, it was the Passover week and he did not want to defile himself by going into a tomb that had a dead body in it. And secondly, he is examining, observing, before entering in. Not as impulsive as Peter. It says, **Therefore Simon Peter comes following him, and he entered into the tomb, and he observes the linen wraps lying, and the head wrap which was over His head not lying with the linen cloth wraps, but was separate having been wrapped into one place.**

The bodies in those days were wrapped like mummies in these linen wraps that go all the way around the body. And they put spices on the body, in between the body and the linen wraps. And they go down the body putting in spices and putting in the linen wraps. There are two sets of linen wraps. One that goes around the whole body and one that goes around the head.

But when he looks in, he sees the linen wrappings by themselves and separate from them is the head wrap, still wrapped. The wrappings were like a shell, only no body in it. So it is very important to realize what the women saw and what John and Peter saw; is that the linen cloths which held the body of Jesus was still in its original shape as if the body was still there. But there was no body in it, it was just a shell of wrappings. So they observed. Jesus went through the bandages. Jesus went out of the tomb. Gone in the earthquake. The doors opened to let people in, not to let Jesus out, so that people can see the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So what Peter and John saw, which John relates for us, is what the two Marys saw in our text in Matthew chapter 28. No body of Jesus, but the wrappings in the shell of a body, form of a body in the tomb.

Verse 8, of John 20, **Then therefore entered also the other disciple, that would be John, the one who had come first to the tomb, and he saw, and he believed; for they had not yet known the Scripture, that it is necessary that He should rise from the dead.** Plenty of Scriptures in the Old Testament and the more notable is Psalm 16 verse 10 where it talks about Jesus would not be left in the grave, that He would rise from the dead. But they did not understand the Scripture yet. **Therefore the disciples went away again to themselves, that is, to their own homes.**

The Significance of the Resurrection, very important. With millions of people attending religious services this week, especially today on Resurrection Sunday, most are celebrating the event of the Resurrection. We have to realize that it is not an event but a person, the person of Jesus Christ. We have lost the true meaning of what the resurrection means. You see the Bible presents the fact that there was an incident, there was an event where Jesus was raised from the dead. The Bible never highlights the event because the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not an event according to the Bible. According to the Bible the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a person not an event. There are two reasons why Jesus rose from the dead. Number one, it shows that God the father approved of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross by raising Him from the dead into life. This is John's presentation. Not an event, but the Person.

Because in John chapter 11 it tells us that the disciples were outside of Bethany, and Mary and Martha sent to Jesus to say, "Lazarus, our brother whom You love is sick and dying." And Jesus waited until he died before going. And when they come into Bethany, Martha comes up to Jesus and says, "If You had been here my brother would not have died." Jesus said, "Your brother will rise in the resurrection in the last days." She says, "I know that. I know that in the resurrection my brother will be raised up in the last days." Jesus said in John chapter 11 verses 25 and 26, He says, **"I am the resurrection, and the life."** See, resurrection is a person. Jesus said, **"I am the resurrection, and I am the life: he who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."** Verse 26 **"And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you**

believe this?" And of course, she said, "Yes, I believe that. I believe that you are the Christ." So Jesus said He is the resurrection. It is not an event, as much as it is a person: the resurrected Christ.

This has a couple of applications for us to understand the resurrected Jesus this way. Number one, it is important to realize that when a person is saved, they are resurrected from the spiritual dead. In Ephesians chapter 2 in the first eight verses, Paul describes for us as being dead in our trespasses and sins, spiritually dead. But he says in Ephesians chapter 2 verses 4 through 6, **God in His rich mercy... while we were dead in our trespasses and sins... He has raised us up together with Him.** That is resurrection language. He has raised us up from the spiritual dead.

What happened to me when I received Christ is that His Spirit, the Spirit that raised Jesus from out of the dead, raised me up out of the spiritual dead, made me alive. He raises people from out of the spiritual dead and exalts us in the spirit realm in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, at the throne of God. That is resurrection.

Secondly, not only is the resurrected Christ applied to salvation - raising people from out of spiritual dead; but also it says the same energy and same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that energizes you every single day by the Spirit of God. He said, concerning spiritual resurrection, in Ephesians chapter 1 verses 19 and 20, **I am praying that you might know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.** So not only does He save us by coming into our spirit and resurrecting us from out of the dead, but He also dwells there throughout eternity. But while we were living here on the earth His resurrection power is sustaining us every day.

Let us turn back to Matthew chapter 28, beginning at verse 7, page 3. So it is interesting what the tomb looked like. John said that when he and Peter got to the tomb, that when they looked at the wrappings - because they would wrap Him like a mummy with clean cloth. They would wrap the bodies in linen. In the Greek text of the gospel of John, it says that when they looked in they saw the wrappings as though a body was in it. It still had the shape of the body, but the body was gone. The head wrap was over by itself separate from the rest of the clothes, but it still had its shape.

So the angel - the women have seen this, and the angel gave them a command in verse 7 (on page 3) of Matthew 28. **And after going quickly say to His disciples that He was raised from the dead. And behold! He goes before you into Galilee. You will see Him there. Behold! I told you. And having gone out quickly away from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to report to the disciples.** It is interesting that the women that accompanied Jesus in His earthly ministry were the first ones that saw the evidence and the proof of the resurrection of Christ. Not the apostles. The apostles are back - they ran away when Jesus was crucified, and they are afraid to come out. In fact, when the women came back and told them what the angel told them to tell the disciples, they did not believe it. So it was not the priests, nor to ministers,

nor to religious people - it was to people who were not in positions of leadership that it was announced to them.

It reminds us of the fact that without God's Spirit you can follow the Lord for three years, like the apostles did, the disciples, but if God's Spirit is not with you to help you, and to bless you, and to favor you, and grace you to understand and believe, then you will not believe. Unless God's Spirit gives you that ability. So the disciples did not believe but the women were shown the proof.

Verse 9, **But as they were going to report to His disciples, also behold, Jesus met them, saying, Rejoice! And the ones having come near took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.** The word *took hold* in Greek, **κράτος** (kratos), means *to grip*. So when they were on their way to go tell the disciples, Jesus appeared to them. And when they saw Him and recognized Him, they went and gripped His feet so as to not let go of Him. They finally found Him, but not like they had supposed before. They were gripping Him and in John's Gospel Jesus told Mary, "Stop gripping Me." The English text says in John, "Stop touching Me," but it is literally the word *fasten* or *grip*. The relationship from now on would not be physical. So it is true with all people. It is spiritual. It is by faith.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth in II Corinthians chapter 5 verse 7, **We live by faith and not by sight.** And Jesus when he appeared to Thomas, where Thomas said, "I will not believe that He has risen from the dead until I touch the nail prints in His hands and thrust my fist into His side." And when Jesus appeared in the room, Thomas said, "My Lord and My God." And Jesus said, "Thomas you believe because you see. Blessed are those who believe and do not see." Who believe by faith. It is not the physical Jesus anymore. It is now the spiritual resurrected Jesus. It will be based on the presence of God's Spirit, and His Conviction, and His interaction with our spirit and with our minds.

Verse 10, **Then Jesus says them, Do not fear.** Remember they left the tomb with fear and great joy. Jesus dispelled the fear for them. **Do not fear. Go report to My brothers,** interesting He calls the disciples *brothers*, **in order that they might go into Galilee, and there they will see Me.** So the message is that Jesus is alive. He is resurrected from the dead. And He is telling the disciples to go into Galilee and Jesus will meet them there and appear to them there.

But it is important every Easter or Resurrection Sunday, it is important to realize that millions of people are celebrating an event and missing the whole meaning of the event itself. And that is the person of Jesus Christ is the resurrection. He is The Resurrected One. When He comes to a person is not saved who does not know Him, He raises them from out of the spiritual dead. He resurrects their life from out of the dead. And then after dwelling within them and sustaining them on a daily basis, based on the resurrection power of Christ.

So it is a great day to have a celebration and a remembrance. As long as we have the right meaning, the right perspective, the right focus, the right understanding, whether it means something very personal and very right. Let's close with prayer.