

Series: John

Title: Seeing Things the Lord Did

Text: John 11: 45-46

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John 11: 45: Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and HAD SEEN THE THINGS WHICH JESUS DID, believed on him. 46: But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

Before our Lord spoke and raised Lazarus he did something amazing. He commanded his disciples, “Take ye away the stone” (v39). After he raised Lazarus, he did another amazing thing. He commanded his disciples, “Loose him and let him go” (v44).

There is a stone upon the graves of spiritually dead sinners. The stone of ignorance concerning all things spiritual. A stone is upon every unregenerate sinner concerning religious falsehood—self-righteousness, will-works religion, a love for the world and for sin, prejudice against Christ, his people and true religion.

After Christ converts his child we come forth bound with many grave clothes which we are lifetime being loosed from. Grave clothes such as false religious tradition, pride and legalism, the cares of the world and the sins of our flesh.

Our Lord could have rolled the stone away himself and removed the grave clothes by merely speaking his word. By his word he raised Lazarus’ from the dead. By his word he created all things. But our Lord has given each of us who he has called, the privilege of being instruments in his hand to speak the gospel through which Christ takes away the stone and looses our grave clothes.

Someone might say, “But I cannot remove the stones because sinners are dead?” This is certainly true. When Martha heard our Lord say, “Take ye away the stone” she spoke from a heart of unbelief and inability, saying, “Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days” (v39). When we encounter a spiritually dead sinner, we might think, “He is dead! It will do no good for me to attempt to roll away the stone. It will do no good to speak the gospel to him.” But the Lord answered Martha and “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” (v40).

Without a doubt, when the stone is removed from dead sinners and the graves clothes loosed from off a believer, it is only by Christ the Word speaking his word into our hearts. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (2 Cor 4:7). But “it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. And what a privilege our Lord has given us to be earthen vessels filled with this treasure and used of our Lord to speak to perishing sinners and to help brethren in need. Let us believe the Lord Jesus and speak the gospel trusting Christ is able to bless the word spoken so as to take away the stone and remove the grave clothes. Christ promises that believing our Lord, we shall see the glory of God.

In each heart where the Lord has put his love, that is what his people shall do. Notice, when the Lord said, “Loose him and let him go”, there was no objections. We can picture Mary and Martha and his apostles running to Lazarus and loosing those grave clothes. They did not care that the stench of death was upon him. They did not bind him more. They loosed him and let him go. Why? They loved their brother and wanted to help him get to Christ his Savior.

What is it we are to use to take away the stone and loose the grave clothes? Verse 45 says when they had seen the things which Jesus did, they believed on him. Our one weapon in this warfare is the gospel of Christ and him crucified.

2 Corinthians 10: 3: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Proposition: The power that removes the stone—the word that removes the grave clothes—the word blessed of our Lord—is the declaration of *the things God our Savior hath done*.

Psalm 22: 30: A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31: They shall come, and shall DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS unto a people that shall be born, that HE HATH DONE THIS.

Psalm 145: 4: One generation shall praise THY WORKS to another, and shall declare THY MIGHTY ACTS. 5: I will speak of the glorious honour of THY MAJESTY, and of THY WONDROUS WORKS. 6: And *men* shall speak of the might of THY TERRIBLE ACTS: and I will declare THY GREATNESS. 7: They shall abundantly utter the memory of THY GREAT GOODNESS, and shall sing of THY RIGHTEOUSNESS.

After our Lord saved the man at Gadara, the Lord told him, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things THE LORD HATH DONE FOR THEE, and HATH HAD COMPASSION ON THEE.” (Mk 5:19). That is the word we are to speak. The works of our Lord.

What has our Lord done?

SOVEREIGN TO CALL

John 11: 45: Then many of the Jews which came to Mary...

We declare how our Lord is able to bring his elect under the preaching of the gospel. We can hear them telling about that day when the Lord called them, declaring, “We only came there that day to comfort Mary and Martha and pay our respects to Lazarus. Little did we know that God worked all things together for our good. Lazarus’ sickness and death was to draw us to that place to behold our Redeemer. We heard him declare that he has sheep chosen of God and that he knows them and that he must bring them to the Father. We heard him declare that he makes his sheep hear his voice and they know him and they follow him and no man is able to pluck them out of his hand! And we know it is so because he did it for us.”

God is absolutely sovereign. He is able to bring his people under the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Concerning the Ethiopian eunuch:

Acts 8:26: And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. 27: And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians

Christ forbid Paul to preach in one place and sent him directly to where Lydia was. Then the Lord had Paul arrested because one of Christ’s lost sheep was the jailor. Paul preached the gospel and Christ saved Lydia, the jailor and many in the jailor’s house. That was the beginning of the church at Philippi. Christ does as he pleases in this earth to call his people to faith in him.

Daniel 4:35: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Many come to the Lord’s house for other reasons as these Jews came there that day. Yet all along, God is working all things together to draw his elect under the preaching of the gospel to reveal his dear Son in our hearts! We declare the sovereign power of our God to save.

DISTINGUISHING, QUICKENING GRACE

John 11: 45: Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46: But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

We declare how our Lord saves by distinguishing, quickening grace. All the Jews there that day saw the things which the Lord Jesus did naturally with carnal eyes. But those who only saw naturally went *their* way.

They went back to their religious tradition and the works of their hands. They went back to the Pharisees to tell what Christ had done to further infuriate their religious leaders.

But the “*many who believed on him*” saw the things which the Lord did by God’s supernatural power. They saw by Christ revealing himself in their hearts by his Word. We can hear them declaring how Lazarus was not the only one Christ raised from the dead that day.

They could say, “He quickened and raised me that day! Christ revealed himself to me. I was dead in sins unable and unwilling to believe on him. But by his Voice, I was made to behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. He declared ‘*if thou shalt believe thou shalt see the glory of God*’ and with his Voice came the gift of life and faith. I found myself believing on him. It was not anything in me that made me to differ! I saw by God’s distinguishing, irresistible, regenerating grace. I saw with eyes he gave. I heard with ears he gave. I heard and believed by his grace shed on me abundantly. I was as dead as Lazarus in that tomb. I have no room to glory save in Christ Jesus alone. The only one who made the difference was God by his grace.” Believer, is that not what we say?

1 Corinthians 4:7: For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?

The stone and graveclothes are removed due to God’s distinguishing grace. God chose his people in eternity in Christ. God reveals himself to each his elect by the same sovereign, regenerating grace. The many who believed were chosen of God. They are Christ's sheep by divine election. The many who believed did so by God’s grace worked in their hearts. It was by Christ revealing himself in their hearts. Those who believed that day did not believe merely because they saw the miracle. No sinner was ever saved by merely seeing the miracles Christ worked. They were made to behold Christ himself. They saw God’s glory in the face of Christ his Son.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

God has sent forth his Son. Christ laid down his life in the place of his people that we might live. He is our righteousness. Christ is All!

They could tell other sinners, “We heard him declare he is the Resurrection and the Life! We heard him pray to the Father declaring that God the Father sent him. He said he came to lay down his life for the sheep.”

John 1: 18: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

They could say to others, “By God giving us faith now we know he is the Lamb pictured in the ceremonies. He is the High Priest pictured in the law. Christ is the Mercy Seat who propitiated God for his people whereby God is just to show his people mercy. Now we know it was Christ typified in the Ark by whom Noah was saved!”

We can hear them telling other sinners, “All this time we have been looking to our own works. Now, by beholding Christ, we behold our sin because it took God sending his Son to put it away. Now we know it is not by works of righteousness we have done but by the blood of Christ that we are made the righteousness of God. He is the Resurrection and Life of his people. He satisfied the law and made it honorable. He paid the wages of sin which death. And he did it for his people. He said, ‘I am the good Shepherd and I lay down my life for the sheep!’”

When someone asked them, “How do you know all this is so?” They could answer, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).

It was by Christ the Life that they were given life. They saw God’s Salvation when they were given faith to behold Christ and believe on him. Christ spoke their name and said come forth! He is the Power and Wisdom of God. He is the Son of God in human flesh who saved his people by his one offering. The glory belongs to Christ! Any sinner who experiences the first resurrection, experiences it by Christ the Resurrection giving us life.

Dear sinner look to Christ! Have you seen the things the Lord has done? May he bless his word to take away the stone effectually as only he can.

The law was written on stone. But Christ took away the stone. By laying down his life as Substitute of his people, he took away the curse and condemnation of the law by being made a curse for us. We delight in the law after the inward man because it declares us guilty and points us to Christ our Righteousness.

We come forth with a heart of stone. But Christ rolled away the stone. It is by the Spirit of our Redeemer giving us a new heart. It is by Christ's power we are made willing to believe on him.

We had (and often still have) stones are in our path. But Christ takes away the stones. He blesses his word to cause us to lay aside the sin that besets us and run the race looking to Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith. He draws us to himself for cleansing. If we are his then he has put away our sin. Believer, call out to him confessing your sin. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous and he is the propitiation for our sins.

Salvation is of the Lord. It is by his eternal electing grace, by his redeeming grace, by his regenerating grace, by his preserving grace. A to Z salvation is all of God's grace!

Whatever sorrow we suffer remember, like Mary and Martha found, everything our Lord is working in providence is "Not unto death for his people but for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby!" Believe on Christ and you shall see the glory of God! Let us speak this word to one another reminding each other of the great works our Lord has worked for us and continues to work for us. And by his grace, let us continue to the end believing him alone. One day we shall behold his glory face to face in resurrection glory!

Amen!