

# King Jesus' Resurrection

Matthew 28:1-10

*Halifax:5 August 2007*

## **Introduction**

Last week, we looked at the burial of King Jesus.

- I showed you that although it was a great humiliation for the Son of God to be buried,
  - He was nevertheless buried in the hope that His Father would accept His sacrifice and raise Him from the dead...
  - And the Father testified to this hope by providing Him with an honourable burial, showing that He was reconciled.
  
- But I showed you that there were many among the covenant people—even the chief priests and the Pharisees,
  - who were very glad that Jesus was in the tomb and who wanted more than anything to see Him stay there!
    - They did all they could to keep Him in
      - and when their efforts failed, they then did all they could to cover it up—to deny that it ever happened.
  - And I showed you that there are many who are just eager to deny it today.
    - Like their forbears, they do not want to admit that Jesus was raised from the dead because to do so would force them to admit two things:
      - First, that they are not righteous and desperately need Him as Saviour...
      - Secondly, that He is Lord, meaning that they are obligated to obey Him.
    - Both of these admissions are unacceptable to fallen human nature...
      - It is only when God's Spirit comes to us and changes our nature that we are able to truly acknowledge Christ...
      - Otherwise, we are desperate to suppress truth and will go to absurd lengths to do so.
  
- Indeed, we looked at some of the ridiculous theories that men have devised in their desperate effort to deny the truth...
  - The Jewish leaders themselves spread the theory that Jesus' disciples came and stole His body from the tomb while the Roman guard that had been appointed to watch the tomb was sleeping—something a Roman guard would never do!
    - And because this was the best theory they had at the time,

- it was propagated at least into the second century!
- What desperation—to hold to such a flimsy theory for all those years!
- We also saw that there have been many other theories devised to deny the resurrection over the years, all just as absurd as the first.
  - Everything from the swoon theory (that Jesus never actually died, but just fell into a swoon) to the Hallucination theory to the Mistaken Identity Theory!
  - One can only wonder what they will think of next!
- But all these efforts to keep our Lord in the grave are fraught with folly—
  - They cannot keep buried the One God has raised up! He is Lord of all!
- I then urged you to see to it that none of you are among those who try to keep the Lord Jesus buried...
  - You will no more succeed than the Jewish leaders succeeded when they sealed the tomb and posted the guard.
    - No, He did not stay in that tomb...
    - It is sheer folly for you to pretend that He did,
      - to ignore His resurrection and the implications it has in your life,
      - and to miss the salvation that comes to all who believe that God raised Him from the dead.

Last week, our concentration was mainly on these foolish ones who despise the good news that Jesus rose from the dead...

- This week, we will look at those who rejoice that our Lord is risen...

**I. To you who believe, the news of King Jesus' resurrection is news of great comfort and joy!**

A. Look at the contrast Matthew brings out for us in the angel's affect on the guards verses his affect on the women who came to the tomb.

1. First look at the terror of the guards...there was no comfort for them at all!
  - a. You will remember that the Roman guards had been posted at the tomb to make sure that no one moved the stone door that had been officially sealed.
    - I'm sure they were quite confident that they would have no problem handling Jesus' disciples if they were to show up...
    - These guards were seasoned soldiers who had faced things that were a lot more intimidating than Jesus' disciples!

- They were men of discipline, confidence, and courage.
- b. But to their amazement,
- it was not Jesus' disciples, but a pair of angels that came to open up that tomb!
  - Matthew focuses in particular on one of these angels...
    - He speaks of the angel's descent from heaven, of his actions, and of his glorious appearance with these words:
      - Matthew 28:2-3: And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.
    - He tells us also of the guard's abject terror:
      - Matthew 28:4: And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.
  - Matthew's words here are very descriptive...
    - He uses the same word to describe the trembling of the guards that he used to describe the shaking of the earth in the earth quake...
      - The guards shook just like the earth shook when this angel came.
    - And instead of just saying that the guards were afraid,
      - Matthew says that they become like dead men!
        - They were literally paralysed with terror!

TRANS> This was the effect that the angel had on these Roman guards...

2. But now look at how differently the angel deals with the women who had come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus.
  - a. To avoid confusion, let me first mention that it is clear from the other gospels that the women did not arrive until *after* the angel had moved the stone.
    - 1) It would seem that they came to the site,
      - found the tomb with the stone already rolled away,
      - entered it and were perplexed to find it empty...
      - that Mary Magdalene ran off to tell the disciples about it...
      - and that the rest of the women then saw the angel and conversed with him...
    - 2) It may not appear that way at first in Matthew's account...

- But Matthew is not giving us a chronology of events here...
    - He is doing something very Jewish here—
      - he is putting two events beside each other for contrast...
      - He is deliberately setting up a contrast between the angel's affect on the guards verses the angel's affect on the women.
- b. He shows that the very words of the angel to the women were words of comfort instead of terror...
- The angel says (v. 5-6):
    - "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."
- 1) When we consider these words in contrast to what happened with the guards, the angel is saying in effect:
- "These guards are all paralysed with fear—and for good reason...
    - they were here to try to keep this tomb closed up..."
  - "But you... you ladies do not need to afraid..."
    - "I know why you are here...
      - I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.
      - I know that you have come here to pay your respects to Him, to honour Him..."
    - Sometimes it can be a threat when someone says...
      - "I know why you are here"
        - but if you are there for the right reasons,
          - these words are meant to be a comfort to you.
- 2) Matthew's contrast is brought out all the more when we look at the original language...
- A literal translation would be...
    - "Don't **you** be afraid."
      - The emphasis is on the word **you**.
    - "As for **you**, don't **you** be afraid like these guards..."
      - Things are altogether different for **you** who come with love to honour the One who was crucified!

TRANS> And so the angel is not there to terrify them, but rather to comfort them concerning Jesus

3. To comfort them further, the angel goes on to tell them the news that will be marvellous to their ears!

- vs 6: “He is not here; for He is risen!”

- a. Jesus is not to be found in the tomb because he is no longer dead—

- The one the love is alive!
- The one they want to live lives!

- b. The angel then gives them two pieces of evidence to confirm this marvellous fact...

- 1) First, after saying, “He is not here; for He is risen” he adds the words, “**as He said...**”

- Jesus had told them many times that He was to be crucified,
  - and that He would rise again on the third day.
- The angel is giving them news of the very thing that Jesus had told them would come about!

- 2) Second, the angel calls them to come and look at the place where He lay...

- The empty tomb itself was evidence that He had risen...
  - Clearly, Jesus was no longer in it...
  - There was no sign of any disturbance or theft...
    - His grave clothes were still there, neatly arranged.
    - Here was additional confirmation for their comfort that what the angel said was really true!

TRANS> It is hard to imagine the comfort and joy these words must have brought to these women—or at least some of them—some of them were too perplexed to be comforted.

B. But I want you to see that the angel’s words say a lot more than these women yet understood!

- v. 5-6: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.

- These words have a lot to say to us!

- As is so often the case with our Lord, the blessed words of comfort that He speaks to us go much deeper than they at first appear!

1. These women loved the Lord Jesus, and they had become quite dependent on Him.
  - a. They were right to understand their dependency on Him and to be greatly distressed at the loss of Him when He was laid in that tomb!
    - They had faith in its seed form—
      - they knew that their help and their salvation was in this man who healed the sick, cured the lepers, and raised the dead...
      - they had learned to follow without question this man who spoke to them words from heaven that opened their hearts before God...
        - words that told them all that they had ever done.
  - b. And so they were delighted to hear that He was risen!
    - Even after He died, they somehow knew that He would still help them—
      - And now He had come back from the dead!
      - They knew that He would not abandon them, even in death!

TRANS> As far as they understood this, they were greatly comforted at this time, and rightly so...

- but what greater comfort they would have after they understood the full implications of Jesus' resurrection...
    - after He Himself had opened the understanding of the apostles and all His people to the full significance of what He had done!
  - This is the understanding that belongs to us as His people today!
    - We now understand that...
2. His rising from the dead was the raising up of a whole kingdom of righteousness from this world of sin and death!
    - a. "Fear not indeed," **you** who are trusting in Him!
      - 1) He is a public person.
        - a) As such, He represents all those whom God has appointed to obtain eternal life!
          - He represents the entire kingdom of those God has chosen to believe in Him...
        - b) We were all under the condemnation of God because of our sin...
          - but Jesus came among us and He took responsibility for all that sin...

- Out debt became His, He became our surety.
  - All of God's judgement against us brought Him to the cross and to the grave.
- c) And so we might say that when Jesus went to the grave as our representative,
- the whole church that He came to redeem went with Him...
    - The destiny of us all was bound up with Jesus.
  - If He were stay in that grave,
    - It would mean that the whole church was rejected of God...
    - It would mean that there was no salvation for us.
    - It would mean that no one would be able to redeem us.
      - It would only be a matter of time before the terrors of Hell fell upon us and enveloped us in misery forever and ever!
- 2) But fear not—He is not in the grave, He is risen!
- a) By His resurrection as our representative,
- He pulls the whole kingdom of God up from death and condemnation.
  - We were all in the mire of sin and death,
    - but when He rose,
      - We were all in His train—
        - He pulled all of us who believe up with Him from the miry clay and established us on a rock!
- b) His resurrection was far more marvellous than these women had yet come to understand!
- It did much more to remove our fear than they knew!
    - There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!
    - God's wrath against our sin has been fully appeased.
  - Because Jesus our Head lives, we will live also!
    - How important it is to be found in Him!
- b. How momentous and far reaching is this news that He is not dead but alive!

- 1) It is not just news about one man rising...
  - It is news about the eternal destiny of a kingdom that has encompassed the whole world!
- 2) By this man's resurrection,
  - everything was changed for all the people of God.
  - Let us rejoice and be greatly comforted!
    - There is no news like this news... for you who believe!

TRANS> And now I want you to see further what flows from this...

## **II. To you who believe, the news of King Jesus' resurrection is news to proclaim and celebrate in the Church of Jesus Christ!**

- Once again, we find that Matthew has a very clear and definite focus in His account...
- A. He is very focused on the call that is ours to declare the news of Jesus' resurrection to one another!
    - He leaves out many of the appearances of Jesus to His disciples, and the details about Mary and about how Peter and John came to visit the tomb...
      - He seems to focus almost all of his attention on what the women were charged to do after they were given this news
    - See how in his very brief report of the women's encounter with the angel and with Jesus,
      - Matthew presents the instructions to the women twice...
  1. First, by the angel who was, of course, the Lord's spokesman...
    - a. Matthew tells us that the angel told the women to:
      - Matthew 28:7: "go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed, He is going into Galilee; there you will see Him..."
    - b. You can see that there are two things they are to report...
      - First, that Jesus is risen...
      - Second, that He has called a meeting—an assembly—in Galilee and will meet them there.
        - We might assume that He appointed the time and place more specifically at this time—but the details are not our concern.

TRANS> The women go forth with these instructions—

- from the other gospels, it would seem that they go first to the eleven—Mary Magdalene is not with them—
  - and then, perhaps, after that—perhaps as they are going to tell other disciples of Jesus...

2. Matthew tells that they meet Jesus Himself...

a. And of this meeting Matthew gives a very brief report...

- Basically, Jesus says hello to them—with a very common and ordinary greeting translated “rejoice” that would be the equivalent of “hello”
  - The women grab hold of his feet and worship Him...

b. Then He repeats essentially the same instructions that had been given to them by the angels...

- v.10: Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."
- Matthew is definitely emphasising these instructions!

c. Now if in fact they have spoken to the eleven and presumably told them of Jesus' plans to meet them in Galilee,

- Jesus' repetition of these instructions—to go and tell his brethren—
  - make it very clear that they are to tell not just the eleven, but all of His followers about this meeting in Galilee.
  - They are to tell the whole assembly that Jesus is risen and to invite them to come to the and meet with Him at the place He has appointed!
    - This public meeting in Galilee is probably the meeting Paul refers to when he tells us in 1 Cor 15 that Jesus was seen by more than 500 brethren at once after He was raised from the dead.
    - And, it is almost certainly the meeting Matthew records at the end of chapter 28 where Jesus gives the great commission.

TRANS> By arranging his material the way he has,

- Matthew—or the Holy Spirit through Matthew—is showing us how important it is for us to declare the news that Jesus is raised and to meet Him in His appointed assemblies!
  - He isolates this information from many of the other details in order to emphasise it...
    - It is so important—such wonderful news and such important news, that the whole church needs to know about it and to be reminded about it continually!

- There can be no salvation for Jesus' disciples unless they know and believe that God has raised Him from the dead...
  - If He is still dead, then we are all still in our sins...

B. All this has far reaching implications for us...

1. It means that we need to busy about spreading the good news that Jesus lives—
  - that He was raised from the dead and that we are alive because He lives.
  - a. We are to keep on encouraging one another and comforting one another with this news.
    - It has been our constant tendency to forget!
      - There are many ministers that do not even believe in that Jesus actually rose from the dead...
    - They have allowed the pre-suppositions of a naturalistic philosophy to cause them to reject all miracles.
      - They are left with nothing to preach but a social gospel...
        - a Jesus who is merely an example of how to live better...
        - rather than a Jesus who delivered us from our sins and who turned away God's wrath from us.

TRANS> It's a very sad thing when the church forgets that Jesus was raised!

- b. But it is not just the ministers that are to keep this truth alive!
  - It was the women who were charged with spreading this news to the whole church...
    - They were not called to be preachers in the formal sense,
      - but they were to go about encouraging everyone in the whole church that Jesus was alive.
  - The fact that women were chosen shows that this is to be the job not only of ministers, but of everyone!

TRANS> We forget so easily what Jesus has done—

- We need to make a concerted effort to remember!
2. And not only that, but we are also to encourage one another not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together...
    - These women were supposed to tell the whole church to assemble themselves together according to Jesus' command.
      - He wants to meet with His people!

- He has appointed times for us to meet!
  - And the purpose of these meetings is for Him to show Himself alive to us...
    - as the one who was crucified for us but who has now brought life to all of us.
3. And in these meetings, when we are reminded of what He has done for us and that He lives,
- We are to do the same thing these noble women did when they met Him along the way...
    - We are to fall down, hold Him by His feet, and worship Him!
      - What else can we do but worship Him when we are reminded again what He had done for us, that He who was crucified is now alive and in Him we are raised from death.
- a. Surely this is what Jesus promised that He would do when His Father raised Him from the dead...
- Turn to Psalm 22.
    - This is the Psalm that speaks specifically about His sufferings on the cross...
  - In Psalm 22:22, we have His promise—
    - He tells what He will do after He is raised—after His sacrifice for the church has been accepted...
      - “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.”
      - Of course He will!
        - He will see to it the good news is declared to the whole assembly—to His brethren...
    - In Matthew 28:10, He asks the women,
      - and by implication, all of us,
        - to round them all up to meet with Him.
    - In Galilee,
      - He spoke to them Himself, declaring the good news to them officially...
        - and calling us to respond appropriately to this news.
  - This is brought out in Psalm 22:23-24:

- Ps 22:23-24: You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; But when He cried to Him, He heard.
  - Do you see that?
    - He exhorts us to praise God for not despising the sacrifice that He has offered for us, but for accepting it.
  - Then in v. 25, He promises that we, His people, will praise the LORD for this wonderful salvation in the assembly.
    - Psalm 22:25: My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
    - He goes on to prophesy and promise that this praise will spread into all the world
- b. The work that Jesus accomplished was so great and so momentous that a whole day has been appointed for its celebration...
- 1) And I don't mean Easter once a year...
- We are to celebrate the life that Jesus obtained for us by His resurrection in the assembly every Lord's Day.
  - The first day of the week is the only day we find consecrated in the New Testament—
    - It is the day that Jesus rose from the dead, as our text shows us.
      - John shows us that Jesus met with His disciples later in this same day when they were assembled...
      - And then again on the first day of the week a week later...
    - Then we find in acts that it was the first day of the week that He poured out His Holy Spirit on them—the day of Pentecost was the first day of the week...
    - In Corinthians, it is the day that the apostles appointed that collections be made...
    - It is the day that Luke tells us (in Acts 20:7) was the customary day that the churches met for worship.

TRANS> Clearly the pattern of first day of the week worship—worship on the Lord's Day—was established by our Lord.

- A new day was needed because the even that superseded all the other events of redemptive and creation history had occurred!
  - The Lord was raised from the dead!
  - Let us keep the day holy each week!

- 2) To add other days is in effect to take away from this day...
  - The resurrection of Jesus is such a momentous event,
  - that it is to be celebrated by us every week.

TRANS> And so you see that the women's mandate is our mandate... all of us...

- We are to keep up the memory of what Jesus has done by declaring it to each other...
  - by talking about what the Saviour has done for us...
  - by telling our children and our friends about it...
  - by comforting each other in our trials and tribulations...
  - by reminding each other when we start to forget that our Saviour lives and that He has raised us up to be a kingdom of priests whose lives are consecrated to God.
- And we are to remind one another to attend the assemblies of His people where the good news is declared to us...
  - and where He is worshiped and adored as the One who alone was crucified for us and whose sacrifice was accepted for us.

### **Conclusion:**

- And I will add that all of this in preparation for that final great assembly at which we will again meet with Jesus Himself...
  - and at which we will rejoice with praises that are far richer and far better informed and far more sincere than those we now offer to Him...
  - We are all to remind each other of that assembly as well, and to encourage one another as the great day approaches.
  - We must be sure that we are ready to worship Him in that day,
    - to bow before Him with joy in His resurrection rather than to become paralysed with fear like the guards.
- But if you are not now rejoicing in His resurrection such that you speak of Him and the life He has won for us to one another,
  - It is a sign that you are not ready for the final assembly!
  - It indicates that the news that He lives is not good news to you,
    - but news of the most dreadful sort!
- There are many like that, and I hope that none of you are among them!
  - I hope that you are one who is risen with Christ by faith to a new life of joy,
    - one who can wholeheartedly join with us in the celebration of His resurrection each Lord's Day.