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Christ is Risen from the Dead; Matt 27:62-28:10

GPBC

9.25.22

Introduction – The centerpiece of Scripture, of history, of eternity, and of our salvation is the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf to rescue us from our sin. Everything before the 4 gospels is leading up to that, and everything after the 4 gospels points back to it. If the glory of God revealed in Scripture was measured with light, when we turned the page to read of the death of Christ, the brilliant radiance of God would be blinding. Everything we hold dear in the faith and everything we hope for in the faith rests on the cross of Christ. But that's not where the story ends is it? If the story of Jesus ends with His death then His story is no different than that of Muhammed or Buddha or Joseph Smith. If the story of Jesus ended with His death, then there would always be the question hanging over our heads, "What if it's not true? What if He is not who He said He was? What if He's not the Savior? What if what the Pharisees claim in our text is true, what if He is nothing more than an imposter?" The reason we know without a sliver of a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah and that life and salvation are found in Him, and only in Him, is because Christ is risen from the dead! The resurrection is the gospel's verification. It's not a fairy tale – it's an historical fact.

- I. The Final Attempt to Deny the Lord (27:62-66)
  - a. The chief priests and Pharisees were not convinced by the post-death events as were the centurion and the guards. If you are determined to not believe, you won't – no matter how clear and undeniable the evidence. We're not saved by evidence. We're saved by grace.
  - b. So their scheming continues. In their unbelieving minds, the only way it could be possible for Jesus to rise again is if it's some kind of sham. So in order to prevent the disciples from pulling off the greatest deception of history, they plot to make the grave inescapable.
  - c. As long as the body of Jesus remains in the tomb, then the message of Jesus is forever silenced. So put a seal on the tomb – that is mark it with a Roman seal so anyone would know if you tamper with this grave, you're going to end up in one. And set guards around it to literally prevent any tampering. That should do it, right?
  - d. As far as man is concerned, that's the best you can do to keep the body of Jesus locked in the tomb.

- e. Of course there's only problem with this final attempt to deny that Jesus is Lord. What if Jesus really is the Son of God? What if He really is God in the flesh? If that is the case, there is nothing man can do to prevent Him from rising from the dead. A stone can't hold Him in; He created the stone. A Roman seal can't keep Him in; He is sovereign over Rome. A group of soldiers can't keep Him in; He is more powerful than any soldier. The point is – when God decides to move – man can't stop Him!
  - f. This final attempt was a foolish one. The very thing they tried with all their might to deny is the very thing that happened.
- II. The Vacated Tomb of the Lord (28:1-7)
- a. “the first day of the week”
  - b. V2 – we have a great earthquake when Jesus died and we have a great earthquake when an angel descends from heaven to earth to announce His resurrection. These events are so monumental that even the earth shakes and trembles.
    - i. Notice the angels rolls back the stone to let the women see inside. He didn't roll the stone back to let Jesus out. Jesus had already left the tomb!
    - ii. The glorified body of the Lord can move cross dimensionally – He just stepped through the tomb to the other side.
    - iii. Now we see just how vain the Pharisees' attempt was to keep Him in. He's God! He just walks out right through the rock.
    - iv. Then the angel sits on the stone. The one great obstacle meant to keep Jesus in – the angel kinda props up his feet on it. Man's greatest attempts to silence Jesus are no test at all for heaven.
  - c. V3 describes this angel of the Lord. His appearance was like lightening. You know a bolt of lightening can light up the darkest sky. This angel was glowing with a brilliant light. His clothing was white as snow. It was clear he was not of this world.
  - d. V4 – when lightening strikes right in front of you, it strikes fear. And that's what happened to these rugged soldiers, stationed at the tomb to make sure no one tampered with it. What they didn't expect was an angel to tamper with it! They were so paralyzed with fear, they couldn't speak, they couldn't even move. They looked like dead men.

- i. And listen – that’s just one angel. Jesus created the angels. If one angel can paralyze trained soldiers, what do you think will be the reaction when we stand before the Lord?
  - e. V5 – then he spoke to the women, and the first thing he said – do not be afraid. You see if you are a believer, even though the sight of an angel or more so of God is terrifying, we have no need to fear.
  - f. V6 – then comes those words that echo through the ages – He is not here, for He has risen.
    - i. It wasn’t He is not here for He has been taken. Or this is wrong tomb. He is not here, for He has risen.
    - ii. As He said – there was no power on earth or in hell that could keep Him down!
    - iii. Come, see the place where He lay – look and see for yourself. He was here – He’s not here anymore.
    - iv. Oh my friends – emptiness has never been so full of joy and hope! His tomb, once occupied, is not vacant. That means the gospel is true, Jesus is God, salvation and new life and life eternal are found in Him. He is indeed the resurrection and the life. At the cross we looked upon His broken, bleeding, dying body – in the tomb, He’s nowhere to be seen!
    - v. That empty vacated tomb is precisely why when sinners find Jesus they abandon everything for Him just like He abandoned that tomb for them!
  - g. V7 – go and tell.

### III. The Risen Lord (vv8-10)

- a. V1 tells us these women “went to see the tomb” but they ended up seeing the risen Lord!
- b. V8 – they departed quickly – that makes sense. They had great joy – that makes sense. They can’t wait to tell the disciples – that makes sense. They departed with fear. What’s that all about?
  - i. You might say, “I wonder why they have fear?” The angel had comforted them by letting them know they need not fear. And it’s true, they had no need to be paralyzed with fear like the guards. So what was it?
  - ii. The Scripture doesn’t say but I would suggest this: They had come very close to the greatest move of God on earth. That’s

enough to give you great pause. Secondly, they were the first ones to carry within their hearts the most amazing news ever heard. To have the gospel and share it is a massive privilege and responsibility.

- c. But on their way to the disciples, they ran right into the Lord. “Behold” – they just left a shocking sight, the empty tomb. They just had a shocking encounter, the angel of the Lord. But now comes the greatest shock of all – Jesus, standing right there in front of them. They watched Him die a cruel death from a distance, and yet, here He is. And He speaks – Greetings!
- d. Notice what they did – they clung to Him and worshipped.
  - i. Oh I can’t help but imagine that will be our first reaction when we see the risen Lord, either in glory or coming in the clouds. Cling to Him and worship.
  - ii. We talk a lot about when our loved ones pass away how happy they will be to be reunited with loved ones. Let me tell you, that’s nowhere near the top priority when we leave this life to go be with the Lord!
  - iii. To be absent from the body...
- e. V10 – Notice Jesus’ first words to the women – the same as from the angel but these are falling from the lips of the risen Lord – do not be afraid! If you are with Jesus, He speaks those same words to you today – do not be afraid.
  - i. Then He says, again just like the angel – go and tell.
  - ii. But these next words are what stopped me during my study this week. Go and tell, here it is, my brothers. He called the disciples His brothers. Now these are the same guys who abandoned Him in the garden, one of which denied Him 3 times – and He called them “my brothers.”
  - iii. I don’t know if that strikes your heart like it does mine, but I tell you this, some of you have wandered from the Lord, some of you have lost your passion for the Lord, but if you’ll turn back to Him today, He will welcome you with open arms as a brother or sister.
- f. There they will see me. That was a promise. You and I have the same promise. Embrace Jesus as your treasure, live this life for His glory, and you too will see Him as Savior and Lord!