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 Title: Beyond the Resurrection
 Text: Matthew 28:1-10
 Theme: He is not here, for He is Risen!"

The eternal value of this truth:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is life to the dying and provides hope to the sorrowing. There is nothing trivial in this truth.

Our present danger:

We are confronted by an ever present danger. We believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ but such truth has little impact and effect on our life. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only a theological truth, but is profoundly pragmatic. This means, "It works." It is my prayer that we will move "Beyond the Resurrection" and see His present reality in every moment of every day. Nothing can escape the impact and effect of His resurrection.

Our present seduction:

Because of our immediate and impinging experiences, we have negated the power of His resurrection to transform our lives. We live in experiential straightjackets. We can hardly move. Often we are no better than the deist who believes in a god, but has no relationship with it. We are a people suffocating under the weight of misread moments.

- We do not see Him so we believe He is not here.
- We do not feel Him so we believe He does not care.
- We do not hear Him so we believe He is not speaking.
- We do not taste Him so we believe He does not exist.

A god of theory is of no earthly value. Either He is alive and active or He is dead and impotent. May God protect us from playing church and simply showing up to fulfill our Christian duty. Today I want to be awakened to the full power of, "He is not here, for He is Risen!"

Let us begin by noting the immediate context.

Introduction:

"On Friday, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James ("the other Mary") have seen Jesus' body laid in the tomb, the stone door sealed, and a guard mounted. Now, soon after dawn on Sunday morning ("the first day of the week") they return to 'see' and probably to mourn.

The sealing of the tomb has marked death's victory, but now God's agent rolls back the stone and sits on it – symbolizing Jesus' triumph over death."

<http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/archive/aeasdm.shtml>

"He is not here, for He is risen!" What words can capture the power of such a statement? Think with me of the contrasting emotions.

Many thought He was the hope to come. The one who would overthrow the suppressing government. The one who would restore the nation of Israel to their place of prominence among the nations.

Others thought He was a rebel and a rouser of sedition. He was a threat to their positions of importance among the people. He exposed them for what they were, hypocrites.

To the one group, His death brought a deep sadness and confusion. To the other, His death brought relief and gladness . . . then He arose.

His resurrection brought hope to the one and horror to the other. All of Jerusalem was stirred by the announcement, "He is not here, for He is risen!" His resurrection confirmed the historicity of His crucifixion. **All of history pivots on this one powerful punctuation mark, "He was crucified, was buried, and rose on the third day according to the Scripture."**

The thought that He arose filled them with anxious energy. They ran with unbridled joy. Joy crashed over them like the relentless blows of the incoming tide, "He is not here, for He is risen!" They were completely swept up in the avalanche of His power, "He is not here, for He is risen!"

The emotion of such an event is like the 9th inning home run to win the world series of baseball. The ecstasy of the one is contrasted with the misery of the other, "He is not here, for He is risen!" For the one their hope is now secured and for the other their doom is pronounced. How do we capture the fundamental nature of such a thought?

First, the religious establishment hated Him and wanted Him dead. Friend, think about the emotional strain this must have had on Jesus and His disciples.

In Matthew 16, after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus begins to unfold His impending death. He speaks of being murdered (Matt. 16:1, 21; 17:23; 26:3, 4, 14-16). After which the religious establishment sought to trap Him and watched His every word and move (Matt. 16:1; 19:3, 45, 46; 22:15, 18, 33-35).

I suppose it would be similar to being President of the United States. Every word you say is overanalyzed and taken out of context with the sole desire of tripping you up and making you look foolish. And there is a significant segment of humanity that wishes our President dead. We surely struggle to comprehend the emotional stress he is living under. This emotional stress is no less true and more so for our Lord Jesus.

Second, His own disciples would betray Him (26:47-56), deny Him (26:69-75), and flee from Him (26:56).

In His arrest those with Him would forsake Him completely. In His dark moment, when their presence was most needed, they abandoned Him to His enemies. He was left to face them by Himself. Even in our darkest moment we have never been completely forsaken by our fellow man.

Third, He was brutalized by an imbalanced judicial system (Matt. 26:57-67; 27:11-32).

His treatment at the hands of a religious and political system was malicious and destructive. The physical pain He suffered is incapable of being processed by our finite minds.

Fourth, His suffering was misunderstood by those who saw it (Isa. 53:4, 5).

Those who saw Him considered Him to be under the judgment of God for His own sin little realizing that He was pierced through for their transgressions. This is the anguish of being misunderstood.

Finally, when He bore the sins of the world He was separated from His Father (Matt. 27:46).

I cannot even fake understanding as to what this means, but there was a real emotion when He said, “ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?” that is, “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Herein lies the emotional backdrop for our resurrection passage as it will unfold in Matthew 28:1-10. There are three thoughts in our passage I would like to note. The first is initial doubt gave way to angelic confirmation.

I. Initial doubt gave way to angelic confirmation (John 20:2).

They were still consumed by their loss when they first arrived at the burial site. When the first disciples came to the tomb, they fully expected to find His body still in the tomb. They did not understand His death or believe in His resurrection. John 20 confirms this idea when they spoke to one another of His body being taken. In Luke 24, the women were asked the question, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5). They were surprised by the resurrection.

God did the unexpected for the unbelieving in order to display the unimaginable. Our responses to life’s circumstances are often less than a reflection of this resurrection truth. May God’s work in us be so powerful that every area of our life is viewed from His resurrection.

Who the angels are and what they appear to be is secondary to what they say and about whom it is said.

Let us consider the second thought within our passage.

- II. Angelic messengers confirmed the Good News of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:5, 6).

Notice the similarities between 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 and here. He was crucified, He was buried, He arose, “Come, see the place where he lay [He appeared].” Those who spoke of His resurrection desired for the audience to confirm their findings.

Chrysostom, Sermon. 77: . . . their faith had been bowed by the cruel storm of His Passion, so that they sought Him yet as crucified and dead; . . . the weight of the trial had bent them to look for the Lord of heaven in the tomb.”
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/catena1.ii.xxviii.html>

Notice the three descriptive statements by the angel.

- A. “Who was crucified”

Perfect Passive Participle (Same in Mark 16:6). The perfect indicates the state or condition. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of all things experienced in this life.

- Your marriage struggles because Christ crucified is not embraced.
- Your place of employment struggles because Christ crucified is not embraced.
- Your parenting expression struggles because Christ crucified is not embraced.
- Your emotions struggle because Christ crucified is not embraced.

The intent is not for you to “feel” bad by your apparent or perceived failure, but for you to seek Christ crucified. Let me be quick to note that what you think this is suppose to look like is probably not what it will look like, but you will not have rest in any area of life if you do not embrace Christ crucified.

It is impossible to make too much of this. We cannot make enough of Christ crucified.

- B. “He has risen”

Aorist Passive Indicative (Same in Mark 16:6). **Make Christ dead and nothing we have matters.** The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the most significant event in all of history. His resurrection from the dead confirms His perfect life and sin work.

The present danger

We have become accustomed to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and in so doing have stripped Him of His power. Romans 6 tells us that because of our identification with Him, we have been raised to walk in newness of life right now. Let us shake ourselves awake and see Him whose resurrection is our present empowerment.

C. “See the place where He lay”

Imperfect Passive Indicative. Mark 16:6 uses an aorist active indicative.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is consistently and persistently confirmed by many witnesses. This is not a fabricated story. This story has significant weight behind it.

The whole idea of having found the burial tomb of Jesus and the family of Joseph and Mary is completely ridiculous and yet it will be believed by millions.

ILLUSTRATION:

There has been much talk of having discovered the tomb of Jesus Christ. The Discovery Channel is looking to run a documentary on THE LOST TOMB OF JESUS.

“In the feature documentary *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* a case is made that the **2,000-year-old "Tomb of the Ten Ossuaries" belonged to the family of Jesus of Nazareth.**

All leading epigraphers agree about the inscriptions. All archaeologists confirm the nature of the find. It comes down to a matter of statistics. A statistical study commissioned by the broadcasters (Discovery Channel/Vision Canada/C4 UK) concludes that the probability factor is in the order of 600 to 1 that an equally "surprising" cluster of names would arise purely by chance under given assumptions. The film also documents DNA extraction from human residue found in two of the ossuaries and reveals new evidence that throws light on Jesus' relationship with Mary Magdalene.”

<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/tomb/about/about.html>

A probability of 600 to 1 sounds impressive, but consider the greater odds of Jesus Christ meeting only 8 of the prophecies fulfilled in His life.

ILLUSTRATION:

After examining only eight different prophecies (Idem, 106), they conservatively estimated that the chance of one man fulfilling all eight prophecies was one in 10^{17} (a figure with 17 zeros).

To illustrate this Stoner provides the following.

If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They'll cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would've had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man (Idem, 106-107). (Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, 4). <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/radio034.htm>

Regardless as to whether or not it is humanly possible, the Bible says He arose and we of faith believe this.

Let us consider the third thought within our passage.

III. Unavoidable consequences flow from His resurrection (Matt. 28:5, 7).

His resurrection has two powerful consequences.

A. "Do not be afraid" (vv. 5, 10)

Present active imperative. Contrast the fear of the soldiers with this exhortation to His disciples (vv. 4 w/ 5). The unbelieving are to fear judgment, but the believing have no fear.

- Do not fear the oppressive government
- Do not fear unstable times
- Do not fear the unknown
- Do not fear injustice
- Do not fear the grave
- Do not fear failed expectations
- Do not fear your failure

As believers the resurrection banishes all our fears. If you are fear filled, I invite you to embrace the living Savior.

B. "Go quickly and tell"

Our paragraph began with "come and see" and it now leads us to "go and tell." Such is the nature of our encounter with a living Christ.

"Go" is an aorist participle and "tell" is an aorist imperative. The participle is circumstantial and is to be translated as an imperative. "It has both an ingressive force as well as an emphasis on the main verb." (Rogers and Rogers, 65).

There is something about Jesus Christ that compels us to go and tell. Proclamation is a natural response of biblical faith. Our faith is in a living Savior. Notice the language of verse 8, “Afraid yet filled with joy” (NIV). Does this not express our emotions as we go forth and share Christ with our community, nation, and world? We are afraid, but filled with joy.

APPLICATION: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

Notice the language of verse 10. He calls His disciples “brothers.” This is the intimacy we have with God *because of the resurrection*. Do you know Jesus in His resurrection?

Our bible tells us what we are to say and why we are to say it. People live in fear and they must hear that Jesus Christ is alive. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated every Sunday, yet the impact of His resurrection is something that affects every area of our lives. The Church doesn't have much of a reputation as a change agent these days.

The good news of Jesus Christ has a life altering impact on its community and culture. We are to change the community and culture we come in contact with. **A Christianity that does not change the community and culture in which it exists is not a living Christ, but one who is still in the tomb.** It is a resurrected Christ who changes relationships and grabs life at its core.

Our study is entitled, “Beyond the Resurrection.” For whatever reasons many of us although believing in His resurrection, still have Jesus in the tomb. Let us push past the historical event and live in His present reality. May you experience the life of Christ in every area of your existence.

- Who have you told?
- Who do you need to tell?