

THE FIRST RESURRECTION SUNDAY MATTHEW 28:1-15

Text:

Introduction:

This is the morning when the Christian church celebrates what we have come to know as Easter. It is the day when we commemorate and celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

May I remind you that Resurrection Sunday is not about Easter bunnies, Easter eggs or the giving of gifts. It is about celebrating the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the first Resurrection Sunday.

With that in our minds this morning, let's journey back to that first Resurrection Sunday morning. Let's look in on the events at the tomb of Jesus that day and see what happened and what it means for you and me!

1. THE APPROACH OF THE WOMEN (VS. 1)

Matthew 28:1

¹In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Matthew records the fact that two women came that morning. The other Gospel writers reveal the fact that others came also.

There is no contradiction; they probably arrived as part of different groups. However they came, they were sad, defeated and discouraged.

Some had witnessed and others had heard of the death of Jesus on the cross and they were coming to pay their last respects to the body of the Lord.

As we consider their motives for coming, we can see what they were doing early that Sunday morning.

A. Some Came to Look (Matt 28:1)

Maybe they were coming to pray or to meditate near the place where His body had been buried. Maybe they were coming to make sure that everything was in order at the tomb. Whatever the reason, we are told that they "came to see the sepulchre".

B. Some Came to Labor (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1)

Mark 16:1

¹ And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

Luke 24:1

¹ Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

These verses teach is that some of the women came to perform one last labor of love for the Lord Jesus. They came to finished anointing His body for burial. They wanted to serve Him one last time.

C. Some Came to Linger (John 20:11-18)

John 20:11-18

¹¹ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre, ¹² And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. ¹⁴ And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. ¹⁶ Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. ¹⁷ Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them,

I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God. ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

These verses tell us that Mary Magdalene lingered at the tomb after the others had already gone away. Here was a woman that owed much to Jesus. There had been a time in her life when she had been possessed by seven demons, Mark 16:9.

Mark 16:9

⁹ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Her life had been radically changed by Jesus and she loved Him more than life itself. If you will remember, she was one of the last at the cross, Matt. 27:61 and she was the first to see Him after He had risen from the dead, Mark. 16:9.

Matthew 27:61

⁶¹ And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

2. THE ACTIVITY OF THE ANGEL (VS. 2-8)

Matthew 28:2-8

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: ⁴ And for fear of him

the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. ⁵ And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. ⁶ He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. ⁸ And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

A. He Rolled the Stone (vs. 2) – Obstacle 1 Removed

Mark 16:3 tells that while the women made their way to the tomb to finished preparing the body for burial, one of their concerns was how to remove the stone.

Mark 16:1-3

¹ And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. ² And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. ³ And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Thank God, the Lord took care of that stone! Not to let Jesus out, He was long gone before that angel ever arrived on the scene. That stone was rolled away so that men could look into the tomb and see that it was forever empty! One of the obstacles to faith, the stone, was rolled away!

B. He removed the Soldier (vs. 3-4) – Obstacle 2 Removed

Matt. 27:62-67 tells us that the chief priests and the Pharisees were concerned that the prophecies of Jesus might actually come true, and they wanted a guard to be posted at the tomb.

Matthew 27:62-66

⁶² Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, ⁶³ Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. ⁶⁴ Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. ⁶⁵ Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. ⁶⁶ So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Note:

It is sad when infidels know more about the Bible and believe it more than people who claim to know Jesus!

So they sealed it with Pilate's seal and they posted a company of guards at the door. That detachment of soldiers stood as an obstacle between the Christians and their entrance into the tomb of Jesus. However, when this angel appeared, he made short work of the soldiers. These battle hardened men fainted at his feet. Another obstacle to faith, the guard at the tomb, has been rolled away!

C. He Reminded the Saint (vs. 5-7) – Obstacle 3 Removed

As this angel began to speak to the women that morning, the greatest obstacle of all was removed - unbelief! His message inspired them to belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead!

He Reminded them of the:

1. Past (vs. 5) – The Crucifixion – Provided Salvation
2. Present (vs.6) – He is Risen
3. Promise (vs. 6) – As He Said
4. Proof (vs. 6) – Come see the place where the Lord lay

There are two reasons why the appearance and arrangement of the grave clothes are of such importance.

First, there was no sign of human intervention. If someone had taken the body, they could not have removed it through the graveclothes, and it is likely that they wouldn't have removed them anyway. They would have taken the body with them still wrapped in the cloths that bound it.

Neither would they have taken the time to fold the napkin, it too would have been taken with the body, or at least it would have been discarded in a haphazard manner.

In short, the empty tomb was a scene of perfect order. This suggested a resurrection had taken place.

Second, was the ancient oriental custom of the napkin. When a man with servants was eating a meal, he would often use his napkin to signal them during the course of the meal.

If he left the table and wadded his napkin up, it meant that he was finished and would not be back.

If, however, he neatly folded the napkin, it told his servants that he was stepping away for a moment, but he would be back!

Jesus was telling His disciples, "I may be out of your sight right now, but I'll be right back!"

When Peter and John arrived at the tomb, they feared the worst.

Perhaps they thought robbers had come, or that the Jews had taken His body away.

Even Mary missed the napkin and supposed the gardener had moved the body of the Lord, John 20:15.

John 20:15

¹⁵ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Yet, John, who had been raised with servants, Mark 1:20, probably knew this custom and quickly grasped the meaning, v. 8.

Mark 1:20

²⁰ And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

5. The Plan (vs. 7-8) – Go tell

3. THE APPEARANCE OF THE SAVIOUR (VS. 9-10)

Matthew 28:9-10

⁹ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. ¹⁰ Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

A. The Appearance of the Lord (vs. 9)

B. The Adoration of the Lord (vs. 9)

C. The Assurance of the Lord (vs.10)

4. THE ALLEGATIONS OF THE ENEMY (VS. 11-15)

Matthew 28:11-15

¹¹ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. ¹² And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, ¹³ Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept. ¹⁴ And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. ¹⁵ So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

A. The Problem (vs. 11)

B. The Plan (vs. 12-13)

C. The Perjury (vs. 14-15)

Close:

This passage begins with a tale of life and it ends with the telling of a lie. Which has influenced your life the most? The life or the lie?

As I close, let me just remind you that this was the first Resurrection Day, it won't be the last! Because He lives, those who place their faith in Him will live too! Those in the graves will come forth one day, 1 Thes. 4:13-17,

and those who are alive when He comes will never taste of death. Because when He died He tasted death for us, Heb. 2:9!

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

¹³ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Hebrews 2:9

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.