

The First Resurrection Sunday-28 1-15.docx
Matthew 28:1-15

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.

However, instead of Easter, I prefer the name "Resurrection Sunday."

Of course, like so many traditions held by the church, it would be difficult, if not impossible to get the name changed.

You see, the word "Easter" is believed to from the word "Eastre", which is the Anglo-Saxon name for the Teutonic (pre-Germanic) goddess of spring and fertility.

Her festival was celebrated on the day of the spring equinox.

Many of the traditions used in her worship survive to this day.

The Easter Bunny, a symbol of fertility, the Easter egg, painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring, and the giving of baskets filled with treats are just a few of the traditions that survive.

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!

To Know Him and Make Him Known

1) The Women Are Approaching—Vs. 1

- a) Matthew records the fact that two women came that morning.
- b) The other Gospel writers reveal the fact that others came also.
- c) There is no contradiction, they probably arrived as part of different groups.
- d) However they came, they were sad, defeated and discouraged.

- e) 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.
 - f) As we consider their motives for coming, we can see what they were doing early that Sunday morning.
 - g) Some Came To Look - Matt. 28:1 –
 - i) Maybe they were coming to pray or to meditate near the place where His body had been buried.
 - ii) Maybe they were coming to make sure that everything was in order at the tomb.
 - iii) Whatever the reason, we are told that they "came to see the sepulchre".
 - h) Some Came To Labor - Mk. 16:1; Lk. 24:1 –
 - i) These verses teach is that some of the women came to perform one last labor of love for the Lord Jesus.
 - ii) They came to finished anointing His body for burial.
 - iii) They wanted to serve Him one last time.
 - i) Some Came To Linger - John 20:11-18 –
 - i) These verses tell us that Mary Magdalene lingered at the tomb after the others had already gone away.
 - ii) Here was a woman that owed much to Jesus.
 - iii) There had been a time in her life when she had been possessed by seven demons, Mark 16:9.
 - iv) Her life had been radically changed by Jesus and she loved Him more than life itself.
 - v) 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.
 - vi) She loved Him so much for what He had done for her.
 - vii) Surely her hear was broken that morning, but still she came to love Him and worship Him!
 - j) Note: Can you identify with these women?
 - k) Thank God for those people who just want to be near Him.
 - l) Thank God for those who just want to love Him and worship Him and serve Him faithfully.
 - m) It is those people to whom Jesus reveals Himself.
 - n) It is those people whose hearts burn with the flame of love for the risen Savior!
 - o) Note: Isn't it odd that it was just the women that came to the tomb that morning?
 - p) Of course, if it weren't for the faithful, godly ladies in the church, most would have to shut their doors!
 - q) Thank God for redeemed women who love Jesus with all their hearts!
- 2) **The Activity Of The Angel—Vs. 2-8**
- a) Humanity was the only one that sent ambassadors to the tomb early that morning.
 - b) Heaven also sent an emissary to proclaim the good news that Jesus was not dead but alive.
 - c) Let's look in on the activities of the angel that first Resurrection Sunday.
 - d) V. 2 He Rolled The Stone - (Obstacle One Removed) –
 - i) Mark 16:1 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.
 - ii) That stone represented the finality of death.
 - iii) For them, that stone was an exclamation point at the end of the sentence of death.

- iv) That stone said, "He is gone forever!"
- v) Thank God, the Lord took care of that stone!
- vi) Not to let Jesus out, He was long gone before that angel ever arrived on the scene.
- vii) That stone was rolled away so that men could look into the tomb and see that it was forever empty!
- viii) One of the obstacles to faith, the stone, was rolled away!
- e) V. 3-4 He Removed The Soldiers - (Obstacle Two Removed) –
 - i) 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.
 - ii) It is sad when rank infidels know more about the Bible and believe it more than people who claim to know Jesus!
 - iii) So they sealed it with Pilate's seal and they posted a company of guards at the door.
 - iv) That detachment of soldiers stood as an obstacle between the saints and their entrance into the tomb of Jesus.
 - v) However, when this angel appeared, he made short work of the soldiers.
 - vi) These battle-hardened men fainted at his feet like a bunch of silly teenagers at Elvis Presley concert!
 - vii) Another obstacle to faith, the guard at the tomb, has been rolled away!
- f) V. 5-7 He Reminded The Saints - (Obstacle Three Removed) - As this angel began to speak to the women that morning, the greatest obstacle of all was removed - unbelief!
 - i) His message inspired them to belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead!
 - ii) Notice what he reminded them of.
 - iii) V. 5 Of The Past - They were reminded of the crucifixion. Of course, these ladies needed no such reminder.
 - iv) They had both been there, John 19:25.
 - v) Still, the fact of His death is emphasized.
 - vi) This reminds us of the importance of the death of Jesus on the cross.
 - vii) His death provided the sacrifice that was needed to cleanse sinners from their sins and to make them right with God,
 - viii) **Isa. 53:4-6—" Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.**
 - ix) **Heb. 9:22—" And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**
 - x) **1 John 1:7—" but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**
 - xi) V. 6 Of The Present - The angel tells them, "You are here at this tomb, but Jesus isn't! He is risen!"
 - xii) My friends, this was the greatest proclamation ever to fall upon human ears!

- xiii) His death was the perfect, eternal payment for sin, but His resurrection was God's receipt for the full amount!
 - xiv) You see, a dead Savior can save no one!
 - xv) But a living Savior can offer salvation to all who come to Him by faith,
 - xvi) Heb. 7:25—" Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
 - xvii) When Jesus died on the cross, He said, "It is finished!",
 - xviii) John 19:30—" Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.**
 - xix) When He rose from the dead, God the Father said, "I am satisfied!"
 - xx) Now, Jesus had proven that He was Who He had claimed to be all along,
 - xxi) John 11:25-26—" Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"**
 - xxii) Now, He can declare His victory over death,
 - xxiii) Rev. 1:18—" and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.**
 - xxiv) Now, we can look to Him by faith and be confident of His power to save,
 - xxv) Acts 16:31—" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."**
 - xxvi) That is the present state of affairs!
- g) 3. V. 6 Of The Promise –
- i) They are reminded that His resurrection should not have taken them by surprise!
 - ii) After all, it was what He said that He would do all along, Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:7; 17:23; 20:19; 26:31; John 2:19; 10:17.
 - iii) At least 8 times
 - iv) The resurrection should not have caught them off guard.
 - v) The crucifixion should not have taken them by surprise.
 - vi) They should have been holding worship services outside the tomb early that morning!
 - vii) They should have been there ready to meet Him when He came out of the tomb.
 - viii) Again, I will remind you that it seems like the Jewish leaders had more faith in the promises of Jesus than did His Own disciples!
- h) 4. V. 6 Of The Proof –
- i) The angel's invitation is for them to look into the tomb and see for themselves that Jesus is gone!
 - ii) Later, when the Peter and John arrive there, John records the fact that the linen cloths that had been wrapped around Christ's body were lying there like an empty cocoon, while the napkin that had been about His face was folded in a place by itself.
 - iii) This sight caused John to believe in the resurrection,
 - iv) John 20:2-7—" So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered**

the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

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

vi) First, there was no sign of human intervention.

vii) 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.

viii) They would have taken the body with them still wrapped in the cloths that bound it.

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

x) In short, the empty tomb was a scene of perfect order.

xi) This suggested a resurrection had taken place.

xii) Second, was the ancient oriental custom of the napkin.

xiii) When a man with servants was eating a meal, he would often use his napkin to signal them during the course of the meal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) 5. V. 7-8 Of The Plan –

i) They were to go and share the good news that Jesus was risen from the dead.

ii) Those disciples who were cowering in fear that the next cross might be their own were to receive the glorious news that Jesus had conquered death and was alive forevermore!

j) What a glorious message those women were given that day!

k) It was a message of hope.

l) A message of life.

m) A message of victory.

n) It was a message that every one needed to hear.

o) It still is!

p) May we never forget that the message of that tomb is as fresh today as it was then!

q) Jesus is still alive and men trapped in the bondage of fear and sin still need to hear about it.

r) May we do as they did and carry the message with swift feet and joyful hearts to a world that needs desperately to hear about a risen Lord!

3) **The Appearance Of The Savior—Vs. 9-10**

a) V. 9a The Appearance Of The Lord –

- i) As they were going to tell the others, Jesus Himself met them in the way.
- ii) He came to give them a personal word of encouragement and hope,
- iii) Ill. "All hail!" = "O joy!".
- iv) He came to them personally so that they might know first-hand that He had indeed risen from the dead.
- v) Note: It is a wonderful thing to hear from others what Jesus can do.
- vi) But, there is nothing like meeting Him for yourself!
- vii) Oh glorious day when Jesus Himself comes to that one trapped in sin and reveals Himself as the living Lord!
- viii) There is nothing meeting the living Christ for oneself!
- ix) Do you remember that day?

b) V. 9b The Adoration Of The Lord –

- i) When they meet Him, they are so overcome with love and joy that they fall at His feet in worship!
- ii) That is the natural reaction of those who love Him!
- iii) They cannot help but come into His presence with worship and praise.
- iv) It is a fact, those who know the risen Savior have a desire to worship Him!
- v) May I just remind you that He is worthy to be worshiped?
- vi) He is worthy of all the praise we can heap upon Him!
- vii) There is no need to hold back in your love and expressions of love for Jesus.
- viii) After all, He is the theme of Heaven's worship,
- ix) Rev. 4:11—" **Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.**"
- x) Rev. 5:9-10—" **And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."**
- xi) He should be the theme of worship on the earth as well,
- xii) Heb. 13:15—" **Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.**

c) V. 10 The Assurance Of The Lord -

- i) When the Lord speaks to these ladies, it is to comfort their hearts and confirm their mission.
- ii) He assures them that all is well and that the time to be afraid had forever passed.
- iii) He is alive and will take care of all that arises in life!
- iv) That is glorious news!
- v) Only a living Lord can give peace and assurance to the hearts of His people,
- vi) John 14:27—" **Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**
- vii) Only a living Lord can be present with them in the way,

viii) Heb. 13:5—" **Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"**

ix) Only a living Lord can speak words of comfort, peace and hope!

x) Thank God for our living Lord this morning!

4) **The Enemies Accusations—vs. 11-15**

a) Not everyone who heard about the events at the tomb were overjoyed, however!

b) We see in these closing verses of our text that the enemies of the cross and of the resurrection were already gathering to try and find a way around what had happened that day.

c) V. 11 The Problem –

i) If Jesus was really alive from the dead, then the Jews had a real problem!

ii) It meant that He was right and they were wrong!

iii) It meant that their system of worship was dead and that Jesus, alone, was the path to salvation!

iv) They had to find a way to silence the disciples and to counteract what had happened at the garden tomb early that morning.

v) They were terrified!

vi) By the way, all religious systems in the world are bothered by the empty tomb!

vii) You see, you can travel to China, find the tomb of Buddha, and it will say "Occupied" over the door.

viii) You can travel to the middle east and find the tomb of Mohammed, and it will say, "Occupied" over the door.

ix) Travel to Russia and look at the body of Lenin in his glass coffin and the sign should say, "Occupied."

x) But, travel with me to Palestine.

xi) Let's go to an old tomb hewn out of a rock.

xii) The tomb where they tell us the body of Jesus once lay.

xiii) What does the sign over the door say, "Vacant!"

xiv) That empty tomb sounds the death knell for every other religious system on the face of the earth!

xv) There is one risen Savior and His name is Jesus!

xvi) There is one Way to Heaven and His name is Jesus.

xvii) There is only One who descended into the depths of death and came to life again the eternal

xviii) Victor over death for all who believe in Him, and His name is Jesus!

d) V. 12-13 The Plan –

i) His resurrection is a problem for all who do not believe, so they try to find a way to discount it.

ii) This is what the leaders of the Jews are doing in these verses.

iii) Ill. The context.

iv) They made up a lie to cover the truth.

v) They devised a scheme to avoid having to face the facts.

vi) They willingly chose darkness over the light!

vii) That's what people do every day!

viii) They hear the claims of the Gospel and they turn a deaf ear to it.

- ix) They try and justify their rejection, but it is still just that!
- x) They are saying no to the only One Who can give them life.
- xi) They are refusing Jesus, the Truth, and believing the lie of Satan and going off into damnation!
- xii) It is a foolish plan!
- e) V. 14-15 The Perjury –
 - i) They agreed with the soldiers that if Pilate heard about this thing, they would lie for them and get them off the hook.
 - ii) After all, for a Roman soldier to sleep at his post carried a sentence of death.
 - iii) But, notice what they told them to say: "His disciples came by night and stole Him away."
 - iv) What?
 - v) Those eleven men were off somewhere cowering in fear,
 - vi) **John 20:19—" So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."**
 - vii) They were so scared that when He was arrested, they fled in fear.
 - viii) They were so afraid that only one of their number was brave enough to go to the crucifixion.
 - ix) They were so afraid that they allowed the women to go to the tomb to finish preparing the body.
 - x) These men would never have stolen that body.
 - xi) They were just too afraid! Besides that, all of them but John, and he was boiled in oil, died for their faith.
 - xii) They were persecuted to death because they preached the resurrection from the dead!
 - xiii) If it were not true would they have died for it?
 - xiv) I don't think so!
- f) Note: Of course other theories have been presented to account for the empty tomb.
- g) Among them are: The Swoon Theory.
 - i) This theory says that Jesus wasn't dead, He just fainted on the cross and everyone thought He was dead.
 - ii) Then He was embalmed, and survived that.
 - iii) Then He spent three days and nights in a cold tomb, without medical treatment, and survived that.
 - iv) Then He, in His weakened state, managed to roll away that heavy boulder at the entrance to the tomb.
 - v) Then he convinced the disciples that He had a glorified body and finally He went away to die in solitude.
- h) Another is The Wrong Tomb Theory.
 - i) This theory states that every one, the disciples, the soldiers, the women, even the angels all went to the wrong tomb.
 - ii) Of course, the Jews would have eventually found the right tomb and produced the body if this were true.
- i) There are many other theories that have been proposed over the years, but these are enough to see how absurd they all are.

- j) How much better it is just to take the Lord at His word and believe that Jesus did just what He said He would do.
- k) He died on the cross and He arose from the dead!
- l) Why fight it?
- m) It takes far more faith to believe the lie than it does to accept the truth!

Conc: 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?

I praise the Lord for the life!

It has changed my life forever.

The events of that day will forever reverberate throughout eternity.

Those who come to Jesus by faith will be saved, and become partakers of the life of God in Christ.

Those who believe the lie are damned!

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 Thess. 4:13-17—" But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

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—" But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Thank God for that day when death lost the battle with Life forever!

Thank God for the day the battle was forever won for you and me!

Thank God for that first resurrection day!