**He Has Risen!**

April 12, 2020

Mark 16:1-20

Key Verse 16:6 “‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”

The resurrection is not just one element of Christianity--it is the main event. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is the greatest event in history. It is the cornerstone of the gospel promise. It is the primary theme of worship and praise because the resurrection is the source of eternal life for believers; because he lives, we also live. Without the resurrection, the cross would be meaningless. Without the resurrection, the cross would be powerless. The Bible says that if Christ was not raised, then your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins. The resurrection is not an epilogue. It is not an appendix at the end of the story. It is the climactic high point of the work of Christ. We are thankful for the cross, but we celebrate the resurrection as making the cross meaningful. So we meet every first day of the week as we mark out the significance--the singular significance--of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. On this resurrection Sunday, let’s think about why the resurrection of Jesus is the good news of great joy.

Look at verse 1. “When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body.” The Jews took great care in preparing the dead body for burial. Family and friends washed the dead body, rubbed it with spices and fine oil, and wrapped it in cloths. Neighbors and others came to express their grief and console the family. However, the Sabbath rest required by the Law of Moses prevented Mary Magdalene and others from caring for Jesus’ body on the day he died. Since Jesus died about three hours before the start of the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea buried him without having completely prepared his body for burial. For that reason, Mary Magdalene and others went to his tomb after the Sabbath, hoping to complete the process. See, how much they loved Jesus! They had nothing to gain by doing this one last act of love. Who would do this except these women? Women like these are truly beautiful and sacrificial.

Look at verses 2-3. “Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’” They remembered the massive stone which blocked Jesus’ tomb. They realized they would not be able to move it and they didn’t bring any strong men along to help them. But they didn’t have to worry about that. Verses 4-5 says, “But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.” Seeing the stone removed, they instinctively entered the tomb. Their intention after all was to anoint Jesus’ dead body with spices. That is why they went there. But a young man in a white robe alarmed them. Of course it was an angel, but they did not yet realize this.

Look at verses 6-7. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’” The angel knew why they had come. They had come looking for Jesus. The angel also knew that Jesus had been crucified. Then the angel gave them the three greatest words ever heard by mortal ear: “He has risen!” It meant, “Jesus Christ rose from the dead! Hallelujah! Christ lives!” Death cannot keep his prey—Jesus, my Savior! He tore the bars away—Jesus, my Lord! Up from the grave He arose, With a mighty triumph o’er his foes. He arose a Victor from the dark domain, And He lives forever with His saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!” Life has been answered. Jesus Christ wins! This is greater than any sports victory. This is greater than any battle victory. This is the greatest news the world has ever heard: Jesus Christ triumphed over death.

What then does it mean for the human race? First, it means our sins have indeed been forgiven. Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many. Jesus made a new covenant in his blood for the forgiveness of our sins. But if Jesus had died and remained in the grave, we would have no convincing proof that what Jesus claimed is true. There were thousands who were crucified at the time of Jesus. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, his death would be no different from those tragic death. 1 Corinthians 15:14-17 says, “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead…And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” Since Jesus Christ rose from the dead, we have the promise and assurance that our sins are indeed forgiven by his blood. Jesus’ resurrection proves that God accepted his death as an atoning sacrifice.

Second, death has no power over us. Jesus was raised in the resurrection body, and he lives forever. His resurrection is different from Lazarus’ resurrection. Lazarus was raised after 4 days, but he was raised in the same body, and he died again later. But Jesus was raised never to die again. His resurrection body cannot decay. It is not subject to cancer. It is not subject to OCD. It is not subject to coronavirus. These are symptoms of the power of death which make us afraid. Many people have plastic surgery to look young. But it is all futile. They will all grow old and die. You don’t need plastic surgery. You will be raised in a glorious resurrection which is beautiful beyond imagination. In this world, we groan inwardly due to our sinful nature. But when Jesus comes again, we will be clothed with the glorious resurrection body where we don’t need to struggle with anxiety, weight and fear.

Third, since Jesus rose from the dead, we have a living hope in the kingdom of God. Before Jesus rose from the dead, death remained our last enemy and we had no guarantees of what is to come after we die. But through Jesus Christ we now have the promise and assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Since Jesus conquered death, we who are in him, can conquer death and plunge into life eternal with Jesus Christ our Lord. Remember Jesus’ own words in John 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” All other hopes in this world are dead hopes or dying hopes. For example, if our hope is in family, that is a dying hope since all the people we put our hope in are getting older and will die one day. The same is true for hope in money or fame or pleasure or career or friends. These things all fade and perish with time. Apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:3-4 of the living hope: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you…” Those who have a living hope can live meaningful and victorious lives in Christ. On the other hand, apart from the hope and victory that are in Jesus, life is empty, vain and a chasing after the wind. It is one limitation and frightful dead end after another.

This was the good news which the women received at the empty tomb. This was the good news which they were told to go and tell the others. How did the disciples respond to the news of Jesus’ resurrection? Look at verse 11. “When they heard the good news that Jesus was alive and that she has seen him, they did not believe it.” We wonder why the disciples did not believe, even though they had heard Jesus’ words concerning his death and resurrection so many times. We wonder why they did not believe Mary Magdalene and the other two disciples. It was not their intention; they actually wanted to believe, but they could not because they were paralyzed by fear. They were hopeless and despairing because they thought Jesus died on the cross as a victim of the evil world and now it was their turn. They thought their lives as disciples had come to a sorrowful end. They worried about how they would survive in the future and they were full of fear. Fear made them hard-hearted. Fear made them cowardly. They were caught by the spirit of fear which made them fearful of everything. The source of unbelief is fear.

How did Jesus help them? Look at verse 14. “Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.” After these things, the 11 disciples gathered together and were eating dinner. They stopped weeping and mourning for a while in order to eat because they were hungry. Then Jesus appeared to them as they were eating. He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Jesus didn’t wait until they finished eating. He rebuked them while they were eating. How embarrassing it was that they got rebuked while they were eating. There is a Korean saying, “Even a dog should not be disturbed while eating.” A piece of hamburger meat must have been stuck in their throat. Jesus rebuked them so that they would turn their eyes to the Risen Christ. Jesus rebuked them so that they might overcome their unbelief and have faith in the resurrection of Christ. Jesus rebuked them so that they might have world mission vision. When we do not have faith in the resurrection of Christ, everything looks dark and hopeless.

What did Jesus tell these weak disciples? Look at verse 15. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.” Jesus gave them the world mission command, in spite of their present spiritual condition. He did not say, “When you become fully convinced that I’ve conquered sin and death, then go and tell the world.” Here we learn Jesus’ faith in his disciples. Jesus knew that his disciples were unbelieving and that their hearts were hard. Most people would have sympathized with the disciples—they were really in a hard situation. But Jesus did not sympathize with them. Jesus knew that they did not have any money to buy airplane tickets to go out to the whole world. But Jesus believed that they would go out to the ends of the earth anyway. Jesus not only believed that they would go out, but also he believed that they would preach the good news to all creation. Jesus believed that the whole world would be evangelized by them. The disciples had no vision, only struggling to survive. But Jesus had world mission vision. Jesus saw the whole world through them and said, “Go into all the world...” When Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation,” he was restoring God’s mission given to man in the beginning. Genesis 1:28 says, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” Our task is to bring all people under God’s rule by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Bill Gates’s ambition was to put a computer in every desk and in every home running Microsoft software. But God has greater than vision. His desire is to reach every person on earth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are to tell the world the good news of Jesus Christ. John Piper said, “People will only see Jesus in us if they hear about him from us. There is no gospel without words.” Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.” Is there anyone Jesus’ blood cannot save? Is there anyone who doesn’t need this living hope? Is there anyone beyond the reach of this good news? May God bless you with the great world mission vision.

Jesus also believed that the gospel was absolute and unconditional. Look at verse 16. “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” This verse contrasts the extremes of salvation and condemnation. Those who believe in Jesus will be saved. Their sins are forgiven. They become heirs of God with Christ. But there are people who take the gospel lightly and live to satisfy their own personal desires and ambitions. They will be condemned to eternal punishment. The only way to be saved from eternal punishment is to believe the gospel. The disciples were so weak that they couldn’t even solve their own problems. But look at verses 17-18. “And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” The Lord promised to give power to gospel workers. He gives power to cast out demons. He gives power to heal the sick. And God promises that he will take care of his servants.

Look at verse 20. “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.” When the disciples did not have faith in the Risen Christ, they were only fearful and useless. But when they had faith in the resurrection of Christ, they became powerful servants of God and their gospel work was powerfully carried out. May the Risen Christ help us with our unbelief and plant in our hearts that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only hope for all mankind. May God help each of us to accept the world mission command of the Risen Christ: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Big Idea: The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives us the glorious hope.