

**CONVERSATIONS AT THE TOMB**

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Matthew 28:1-9

How cool is it that Jesus went out of His way to come back and speak to his followers that were so filled with grief over his death on the cross? As we reflect on this passage, there's three statements I'd like us to really focus on.

The first is found in verse 6: **He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.** v. 6

**\*GOD INVITES US TO COME AND SEE**

**Have you ever wondered why the stone was rolled away? If Jesus was capable of raising himself from the dead, certainly He could have mysteriously exited the cave without moving the stone. My theory is that the stone was rolled away no so much to let Jesus out as it was to let people in.**

**When truth is on your side, you have nothing to hide.** God invites the sinner, the seeker, and the skeptic to "Come and see for yourself that Jesus really is who He claimed to be." He's more than just a good man or a great teacher. He truly is God in the flesh.

**When it comes to the topic of the "Does God exist?" there have always been skeptics.** When I was young, we lived in Missouri for three years. Do you know what Missouri's Motto is? **"The Show me state."** This could be the motto of many people when it comes to whether or not to believe in God or specifically when it comes to believing that Jesus is really God and really rose from the grave.

In fact, even **Jesus' disciple Thomas was a skeptic when it came to Jesus' resurrection.** The resurrected Jesus had appeared to a number of the disciples, but Thomas wasn't there. So he said to them, *"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*

Well a week later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples and this time Thomas was there. Rather than chastising Thomas for being a sceptic, Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

I think that's what God might say to many people: "Come see for yourself. Stop doubting and believe." A lot of people dismiss God without ever giving God a chance.

**Jesus knew that if there was an empty tomb, but no one actually saw the resurrected Christ that there would be all kinds of conspiracy theories.** But look at what the Apostle Paul wrote:

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8*

**The people Paul wrote about were still living when he wrote this.** If what Paul was writing was a lie, all anyone would have had to do is follow-up on the resurrection story with all these people.

**Over the course of history, there have been a number of people who laid down their life for others, but only Jesus had the power to raise his body back to life.** All other religions adore some great, but dead leader or philosopher, but Christianity declares its faith in a resurrected and living Savior.

**The resurrection is so important that there are over 300 verses about Christ's resurrection in the new testament.**

Jesus' resurrection changes everything. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15:17, Paul wrote, *"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."*

**So if Jesus really raised from the dead, then there's a really good chance that Jesus was who he claimed to be and the things that he said about eternal salvation for those who believe in him are true.**

**To the Seeker as well as the Skeptic, God says, "Come and See."**

**But God doesn't just invite us to come and see that He is great and powerful, he invites us to come and see that He is good.** In Psalm 34:8, David wrote, "*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

The empty tomb serves as a vivid reminder that God is great; he's great enough to conquer death. But the cross also reminds us that God is good: good enough to die on a cross as a punishment for our sins.

**What Jesus did on the cross is the very essence of goodness.** 1 John 3:16 says: *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.*

**So God invites us to Come and see the greatness and the goodness of God.**

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**The second phrase** I want us to consider is found in Matthew 28:7:  
Then go quickly and tell his disciples: "*He has risen from the dead.*"

**\*GOD CALLS US TO GO AND TELL**

It's one thing to come and see what God has done, but it can't stop there. God calls us to "*Go and tell.*" And **notice the urgency** in verse 7. The angel said, "*Go quickly and tell them that Jesus has risen from the dead.*"

**And do you know what the women did? They decided they'd wait till the timing seemed right to tell others about Jesus, right? Wrong!** Verse 8 tells us that "*they hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, to tell the disciples.*"

In their case, they were probably afraid because they were freaking out about what they'd just seen and their conversation with an angel. But their joy was greater than their fears so they hurried off to tell others about Jesus.

**When it comes to telling others about Jesus, maybe you're a little afraid, but is the passion you have for Jesus greater than your fears of telling others about Jesus?**

And if your joy for the Lord isn't enough, then maybe your love for the people in your life and the reality of what's at stake will cause you to push past any fears you have. After all, **we're talking about where people will spend the rest of eternity.** That's pretty good motivation.

Listen to Romans 10:13-15: *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*

Apparently those who tell others about Jesus have *beautiful feet*, which is another way of saying that we are blessed if we where the good news about Jesus with others. Telling others about Jesus isn't just a responsibility, it's a blessing.

**So when it comes to telling the people in your life about Jesus: if not you, then who. If not now, then when?**

The last portion of our passage that I want to focus on is verse 9: Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

**\*THE REALITY OF JESUS' DEATH & RESURRECTION COMPEL US TO WORSHIP HIM**

Notice their response: One glimpse of Jesus and they fell at his feet and worshipped Him.

**We often tend to think of worship in terms of singing, but I'm not so sure they began singing to Jesus.** Worship is expressing love and adoration and I think they were just so excited that love and adoration were just oozing out of them.

**That may be the key to worship.... It's being so focused on Jesus and all that he's done for us that we can't help but want to express our love and adoration of him.**

***Lead to communion and worship through song/ Communion***

The greek word that's used for "see" is more than just seeing something with your eyes. It means to *perceive or know*. **God wants us to come and know him on a very personal level.**

Revelation 3:20 says: Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

**What is God saying to you this morning?**

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

APRIL 4, 2021

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\*GOD CALLS US TO \_\_\_\_\_.

\*THE REALITY OF JESUS' \_\_\_\_\_

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