

He Has Risen, Just as He Said

Matthew 28:1-20

Key verse 6: **“He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay”.**

This passage is about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It reveals how the power of death was broken. It tells us Jesus' victory has become our victory. Jesus has rescued us from the power of death. Like a fireman running into a burning building to rescue those who are in harm's way. Our rescuer is Jesus. He saved us completely. We are free from the power of death caused by sin.

We all want to live meaningful and joyful lives. As we live in this flesh that withers away, we are often reminded of death. When challenging situations such as Covid, senseless killing and natural disasters happen we are prone to lose hope. There is only one cure for the virus of fear, which is resurrection faith. Resurrection faith enables us to live with joy, by living without fear of death. In this passage we will see the importance of believing in Jesus' resurrection and how to experience it. Through resurrection faith we can live victorious lives to glorify God.

Part 1. Jesus Has Risen.

Verse 1 tells us 28:1 **After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.**

The message of Jesus's resurrection begins the day after the Sabbath, three days after Jesus had died. We see that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb early in the morning. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were among some of the women from Galilee who followed and supported Jesus' out of their own means. They were witnesses to his death on the cross and had seen the tomb where Jesus' body was placed. The women were bringing spices to anoint Jesus' body as their custom. Matthew's gospel says they went to “look at the tomb”. The women wanted to see Jesus. The disciples had scattered. Only these women would be courageous enough to go and honor Jesus. They would become blessed for what they were about to see and hear. It would change their lives and ours too.

The passage tells us what happened just before they arrived.” **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.”** (2-4).

As the women came into the garden, they became frightened at what they saw. The aftershock of a violent earthquake. The once strong soldiers who were there to guard the tomb had become like

dead men. A glorious angel from heaven was sitting over the empty tomb. This was not what these women had expected to see; naturally, they had become afraid. The angel, seeing that these women were deeply troubled, spoke to them words to bring them joy. Verses 5 and 6 tell us what he said: **“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.” (5-6).**

The angel told them too not be afraid. Though they may have thought they had a good reason. The angel told them He was not there that Jesus had risen. He had risen just as he said and asked them to see for themselves. We can imagine that this news that Jesus was not there had shocked the women. They may have considered ‘are we at the right tomb’? Of course, they were. They may have been confused by what rising from the dead meant. When did Jesus say this? This caused the women to consider what all this meant. In fact, Jesus mentioned it to his disciples just before entering Jerusalem. **Mathew 20:18-19 says, 18 “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”**

They had remembered his words and the tomb was definitely empty.

These women went to the tomb early that morning with different expectations. They were going to look at a tomb where Jesus was lying dead. Instead, they came to learn, Jesus Christ had risen from the dead just as he said!

This is great news! It is life changing news! Jesus rising from the dead is proof his work on the cross pleased God. He redeemed us; our sins have been paid for completely. It is through his resurrection we are justified before God. **Romans 4:25 says: He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.** This means God declares us not guilty, for those who are in Christ Jesus can enter eternal life with him. **“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).** We can live in real peace with God when we hold on to resurrection faith that we only have through Jesus. There is no more fear of death because we can stand before God justified. We can live knowing when we do die it will be like a peaceful sleep. Then we will wake up in heaven with a new and resurrected body like Jesus. **1 Peter 1:3,4 encourage us: “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. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.”** Through our faith in Jesus, we have this living hope. The hope is to share in Jesus' inheritance in his kingdom. When our hope is only what we see here on earth, it can easily be shattered by the fear of death. But the hope we find in Jesus is eternal life. This hope overcomes all tragedies that the world ultimately gives. Jesus' word helps us to remember this hope.

Jesus rose from the dead just as he said. Jesus defeated the power of sin which is death. He rose from the dead lives a new life. It is this new life we can begin to live now. Yet, how? **Romans 6:4: “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”** Amen!

Jesus was raised by God in glorious victory. We have the same victory when we die to our sin. Living in our sin causes us to fear death. We need to die to sin to live in Christ. The power of death could not hold Jesus, whom God raised. If it has no hold on him it will have no hold on us who trust God! If it

has no more power, why should we live as if it does? Rather live dynamic lives at any age in any situation with peace and joy for the glory of God. How do we live in this way? What does it look like? Are there classes to take? Certifications to hold? A license to maintain? Let's learn from these women.

After giving the good news to the women the angel now gave them instruction. He told them in haste: **“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.”** (7-8).

The message given by the angel renewed their hope that they lost. This hope revived their sorrowful lives. Hope with a new purpose. Inspired to tell the disciples good news to go to Galilee to see Jesus. We have this new life purpose through resurrection faith. When we hear and receive the good news about the resurrection of Jesus. When we have this hope we want to tell others even encourage our fellow disciples. “Let's Go to the Easter conference where we will see Jesus. We will learn how he has won the victory over death and not live-in fear.” So, the women went filled with joy but were still afraid. Is it possible to hear the resurrection message and still be afraid yet filled with ‘joy? Is it not a clear cut and dry transition? Joyful message.... happy heart.... go and tell? What could we do if we find ourselves still afraid after this message of Jesus’ resurrection? Let's follow these women as they go and tell us maybe we will learn something.

As these women were on their way to tell the disciples, **“Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**” (9-10).

This is just what the women needed: they met the risen Jesus. He came to them--to help them believe and cast away their doubts and fears. His greeting was more than a casual greeting. It was a greeting that inspired joy and made them happy. It caused them to cling to Jesus and worship him. They did not want to let him go, but Jesus assured them they did not need to be afraid. When we have any fear, we need to come to the risen Jesus. We can find him in his word and through prayer. When we see Jesus, we find strength to go and tell with joy no fear. Otherwise, we depend on our own strength filled with fear. Then we go and tell as if it is a chore or punishment. We need resurrection power and direction from Jesus alone. When we go and tell with resurrection power, we are full of joy and happiness.

He also called his disciple brothers, though they had deserted him. They were full of anxiety, hiding at home. Jesus let the women know he cared for them as brothers. As his brothers Jesus wanted to see them where he had told them to go in Galilee. As a result of meeting Jesus, the women continued on their way with the good news.

What they need is what we need. It is an encounter with the risen Jesus. Worshiping him thanking him for his grace to us. Then to go and tell, trusting our very lives to the risen Jesus. It is good to get a degree in theology, yet not necessary for the work Jesus called common men to do. His disciples were fishermen and civil servants, common people. Jesus used common women to be the first witnesses and messengers of his resurrection. He can use you to.

Part 2. Victory in the truth.

After their encounter with the risen Jesus, feeling better, these women had the truth and were going to deliver it to the Eleven. As they were on their way so were some of the Guards from the tomb with a report, verses 11-15 describe the events that followed the guards report. The Guards' Report: **"While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, 'You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.'" So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.**" (11-15).

A lie was planned to suppress the truth by the religious leaders. This lie was bound by a bribe to the soldiers and was spread among the Jews to this very day, like fake news on the internet.

Jesus' resurrection is not a fake; rather it's the truth. It is true because the resurrected Jesus is alive today. It is true and we see the evidence he is still transforming lives everywhere to this very day.

Finally, when Jesus meets his brothers, the disciples, in Galilee and he gives them a great command and inspiring promise. **"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted."** (16-17).

The disciples saw the risen Jesus and what did they do? They worshiped him as they should. Jesus had won the victory over sin and death. Through his victory they became his adopted family. **"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'**" (18-20).

With all authority the risen Jesus gives a command without boundaries. He gives a command that he enables through his authority to be done. Who gave Jesus this authority, we learn who in **Ephesians 1:20-23: "He exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come? And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."** God the Father gave Jesus this authority. Jesus' authority is absolute and his words must be held on to and obeyed. The resurrected Lord Jesus by his authority enables us to make disciples through baptism and teaching obedience. His authority never ends. His promise to be with them, and us, to the very end, is most trustworthy. When we trust in the risen Jesus' words, we can go and tell. When trust in his power and authority over our lives, we can obey and do anything in order to fulfill his command. When we hold on to his words, we know he is with us in every situation. Covid and anything that causes us to fear is just a shadow that has no power. Yet in Jesus we have his power, and his promise, so we have the victory. Campus ministry has its shadows yet we have the victory. Family issues? We have the victory. Health and financial issues? We have the victory. Whatever wants to cause us fear, we have the resurrection power Jesus won for us; we have victory just as he said. Amen.

This passage spoke to me personally about my fear of death. My fear of death was dying without true salvation but living as if I do. My fear of death is seeing family and friends think they are all right with their life and with God. Yet live contrary to the word of God. My fear is my experience with family who were killed or killed other family members and took their own life. My fear is seeing the generational curse of fear in broken relationships through 5 generations, maybe 2 more hopefully not. My fear is seeing and hearing nearly my entire life people dying in war and closer to home shooting in my city. Senseless killings and maiming young and old. It made me hide in school and at home by being quiet, keeping my thoughts and feelings hidden trying to figure life out on my own. It made me hide through drinking and doing drugs. It made me hide until I saw I had this illness. Growing up I had no trust in the teaching of my church. Yet I believed God had the answers to my problem. At a young age I desired to be a missionary but soon afterward I desired to be a mercenary. I searched everywhere until I opened the Bible at 17 and began a new journey. I was not completely free from these chains but since I was 17, I continued to move forward. I narrowed my path to wanting to know and live for God who I come to know as Jesus. The only Son of God. I come to know this through his words. I see how everything from the beginning to the end point to Jesus. This is not an accident nor a hard-pressed interpretation just the plain truth. Since joining 1;1 Bible study 25 years ago this September I have struggled not in growing rather in failure. It was through these many failures I saw I needed more from God. I was weak. This weakness was generational meaning those before me were not as weak yet their weakness was passed down 2-fold to me. Yet as I observed as I attended meetings, I saw transformation. It was through the lives and testimonies I heard of how peoples' lives that were transformed through the word of God. I witnessed it. Steve Stasinis is one of the many I have seen transformed. Yet I was not transforming. I often heard about resurrection faith yet could not get a hold on it. When I heard about it, I could not truly grasp it. Yet there were those who had it. It was visible to me. I tried serving thinking I would get it. I listen to missionaries instruct me thinking I would get it. I did many things godly thinking I would learn how to get resurrection faith. And so, now I know now it only comes from hearing Jesus' word personally having an encounter with him in word and prayer. It is verified not by my own verification rather by the fruit it bears. When you hear, you will do it with joy. As I struggled late into the evening with this testimony. I considered many things about Jesus' word. How could I understand deeper? I considered Jesus' parable of the Sower coupled with Jesus' passion and resurrection. Through this I learned how I can put into practice the faith I need to bear fruit. By God's grace may I bear fruit with resurrection faith. Resurrection faith is needed to know and serve God without fear of death but with peace and joy. Let's pray.