

RESURRECTION 2022
MATTHEW 28:1-10
THE EMPTY TOMB!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Matthew chapter 28 as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

For the Christian, this is one of the most important days of the year for us. And when I say that I am a little uncomfortable.

I don't think we should look to this as a single day or something we do once a year. We need to live out our faith understanding that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in history, and it is the cornerstone of the Christian faith.

Apart from this day in history, then our faith is empty, it is useless, and we might as well go home and eat, drink and be merry because there is nothing after we die!

One writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

Can the Christian doctrine of the resurrection make sense? Where is there overlap and continuity with the present world? Where is there discontinuity? Does the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the dead have any practical significance?

Paul continues with his focus on the resurrection of the body. He is talking to the Corinthians about the claim that all Christians will be raised from the dead when Christ returns. In essence, if Jesus was raised, it follows that all those who are in him will also be raised. If he has defeated death, then death will not ultimately reign in the lives of those who belong to him. .

..

If Jesus was not raised, it follows that there is no means of escaping death or hoping for something beyond the present life. But because Christ was raised from the dead, Christians must attempt to comprehend the claim that he is going to raise from the dead those who belong to him.

The most significant implication of the passage is the importance of the body. How the human body is viewed will radically shape the way one thinks and lives.

If the body is unimportant, one will either be an escapist mystic or an unfettered hedonist. The material world will not matter.

- Stephen T. Um, I Corinthians – The Word of the Cross, p. 273

Paul understood that fact as he wrote to the Corinthian church and said to them, “**And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up - if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.**” I Corinthians 15:14-19.

First of all, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then what Paul and the apostles were preaching was empty, there was nothing to it, which brings them to an empty faith!

Secondly, if they were preaching a resurrected Christ and knew that He did not rise from the dead, they didn't see Him, they would be liars and people would have believed a lie!

But even worse, if Christ did not rise from the dead then our faith is empty, and we are still lost in our sins!

Martin Luther put it like this, *“Everything depends on our retaining a firm hold on this doctrine in particular; for if this one totters and no longer counts, all the others will lose their value and validity.”*

And Spurgeon wrote, *“I suppose, brethren, that we may have persons arise, who will doubt whether there was ever such a man as Julius Caesar, or Napoleon Bonaparte; and when they do, - when all reliable history is flung to the winds, - then, but not till then, may they begin to question whether Jesus Christ rose from the dead, for this historical fact is attested by more witnesses than almost any other fact that stands on record in history, whether sacred or profane.”*

Do you see how important the resurrection of Christ is?

You see, if death had power over Jesus, if He was defeated by death, then Jesus is not God and if He is not God then He can't pay the penalty for our sins!

And, as I have said, our sins are still upon us because if Jesus Christ is not risen, He can't save us, there is no resurrection for us!

And Paul takes this to the logical conclusion as he continues on here. He says that if Christ hasn't risen from the dead then those that have died in Christ have perished, there is no hope, life is over!

And then the nail in the coffin if this is true. You see, if we have placed our hope in an empty faith, if we are still in our sins, then we are the biggest fools around!

In fact, we are the most pitiable, the most pathetic people around!

But Paul is not going to leave us in this hopeless condition for he tells us, **“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”** I Corinthians 15:20.

As I have said, without the resurrection of Jesus our faith would be in vain and thus, the enemy tries to negate the resurrection and sadly, many believe his lies.

The great 18th century British philosopher, John Locke said this regarding the resurrection, ***“Our Saviour’s resurrection is truly of great importance. In Christianity, so great that his being or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it.”***

Also, listen to what one commentator said about this. He wrote,

Timothy Keller has written: “If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what he said?” If Jesus really defeated death, that gives credence to every claim he made. If Jesus did not defeat death, every claim he ever made is proven false. In the words of Jaroslav Pelikan: “If Christ is risen – then nothing else matters. And if Christ is not risen – then nothing else matters.”

- Stephen T. Um, 1 Corinthians – The Word of the Cross, p. 255

And I will stick with what Jesus said in John 14:19, **“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.”**

He lives, He rose from the grave in a glorified body and that means that I too will live and have a glorified body one day and so will you!

The problem for many is that they are living with Jesus on the cross, but they are not living with the truth that Jesus has risen from the dead!

Let me give you this example and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Every year, people climb a mountain in the Italian Alps and stand at an outdoor crucifix.

There they remember the Lord Jesus died.

A tourist noticed that a little trail led off from the shrine of the cross. He made his way down the trail, and, to his surprise, he found another shrine overgrown with brush.

This shrine symbolized the empty tomb. Unfortunately, it had been neglected.

Reflecting on the experience, the tourist said it reminded him of many Christians who stop at the cross and never proceed to the empty tomb.

- Source Unknown

And the question we need to ask ourselves is which side of the resurrection are you living on?

And the problem when you live on the other side of the resurrection is that your life will be characterized by defeat, emptiness, weariness and pessimism.

But if you are living on the side of the resurrection of Jesus, because He lives, we too will live and our lives will be filled with joy, excitement, enthusiasm as we serve the living God!

As you will see in our study this morning, as they saw the risen Lord, their lives were filled with great joy and that is my prayer here this morning, that you move past the cross, as important as it is, and look to the risen Lord. That you leave here with great joy in your life!

Again, not as an event once a year, but every day we remember the crucifixion of Jesus, what it cost Him to save our lives, and then on into the resurrection of Jesus, the empty tomb!

As one writer said,

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead sets Him apart from all other religious teachers and leaders. Jesus is unique. About a dozen different appearances of Christ after His resurrection are recorded, though Matthew recounts only two of these and the cover-up attempt of the Jewish leaders who had Jesus put to death. Matthew then recounts the Great Commission of Jesus to His disciples. These are the church's marching orders for this age.

- Edward Hindson, James Borland, The Gospel of Matthew, The King is Coming, p. 245

And I would encourage you to read I Corinthians chapter 15 as Paul lists all the people that saw the risen Christ. In fact, there were over 500 at one time that saw the risen Christ, so it is not a matter that his men made this up, there were many eyewitness accounts.

And keep in mind that Jesus told His disciples what was going to happen, and they just did not believe.

In Matthew 20:17-19 we are told, **“Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.’”**

And on several occasions Jesus told His men what was going to happen, but again, they just did not get it. Maybe they had their own ideas of what was going to happen, that the Kingdom was going to be established now and Jesus would rule and reign. Thus, this death and dying stuff was not in the picture.

I know, some of you are thinking, *“Hey, didn’t Pastor Joe just have surgery. Maybe the drugs he is taking is messing him up. What do you mean what side of the cross am I living on?”*

Nope, not on pain medication, never had any after the surgery, this is just me, and that may scare you even more!

But let me show you the two sides of the cross.

In John 16:19-22 we are told, **“Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, ‘Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”**

Did you see that? The two sides of the cross. One side has weeping, sorrow and the other side has great joy!

Don’t live like Jesus is dead and still on the cross!

He is alive and He lives in us! That should bring to us great joy!

Thus, which side of the cross are you living on? That is what we will be looking at this morning.

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Matthew chapter 28 beginning in verse 1 as we look at – ***THE EMPTY TOMB!***

MATTHEW 28**VERSES 1-3**

Let me start out by saying this. I have dealt with people that say that because we are worshiping God on a Sunday and not on the Sabbath, we are going to hell!

It was interesting because one person I was talking with said that very thing and then he tells me he goes to a Baptist church, and they worship on Sunday. I guess we will both be in hell then!

Folks, people may try to argue what day Jesus rose from the grave, but we don't have to argue because we are told here.

Notice how Matthew starts out, "**Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn . . .**"

That means it was Sunday morning, early Sunday morning as the sun began to rise. So Jesus has been in the tomb Thursday, Friday and Saturday and now, early Sunday morning we are going to see that the tomb is empty, He is risen!

And folks, we can worship God and should worship God every day of our lives. It doesn't matter what day of the week you worship God on. We worship on Sunday because the early church gathered together to worship the Lord on a Sunday, resurrection day!

Now the reason Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the Less and Salome, (Mark 16:1 tells us that Salome was with them) came to the tomb was to anoint the body of Jesus with spices.

Why did they come to do that when we were told that Joseph from Arimathea and Nicodemus took care of the body of Jesus and wrapped Him in linen cloth with 100 pounds of burial spices? Because they did it quickly, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to begin at sundown that Thursday evening on into Friday!

These women loved the Lord and they in no way had 100 pounds of burial spices, but they wanted to do their part for the One they loved so much. Also, keep in mind that the first day they could do it was early Sunday morning, before the sun was fully up.

The reason they could not do it any sooner is that because the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to begin at sundown that Thursday evening on into Friday. The next day was the Sabbath day or Saturday, which began on Friday evening and continued until sunset on Saturday.

Now there is a problem for these women as we will see, He was no longer in the tomb, He had risen!

We are also told that there was a great earthquake that occurred and the stone covering the door of the tomb was rolled away and this angel sat upon this stone.

Now keep in mind that the stone was not rolled away by this angel so Jesus could get out. The stone was rolled away so the women could get in and see that the tomb was empty!

Nothing can hold Jesus back; He is Almighty God!

Now was this a literal earthquake that took place here. If that is what took place, you could imagine how they felt, the Roman guards that is!

Now if you have ever been in an earthquake, you well know that the ground under your feet begins to move, and it seems like everything is in motion.

One man put it like this in regard to an earthquake he was in, *“No matter where I looked,”* he said, *“everything was in motion. Then I looked up through the hole in my roof and saw the stars. They became my fixed points of reference.”*

I truly like that because as I look at our nation, as I look at this world, things are unstable, things are shaking and moving and there seems to be no point of reference any longer.

But wait, the Bible tells us that Jesus is the bright and morning star, (Revelation 22:16) and thus, if we fix our eyes upon Him everything will be in focus, we have our reference point and in a world that seems to be out of control, we are stable because our feet are upon the Rock, Jesus Christ!

Now as cool as that is, some feel that this was not a literal earthquake here. More than likely, they believe, it was the disturbance of the guards at the tomb. We will see that in Matthew 28:4 in a few minutes.

But there we are told, **“And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.”**

As Clark points out of what transpired here, he wrote,

Seismov, shaking or commotion of any kind: probably the word means no more than the confusion caused among the guards by the angel’s appearance. All this had taken place before the women reached the sepulcher.

- Clarke

I don’t think this angel needed an earthquake to move the stone, but I think the ground did shake and for these Roman guards, as they saw this take place, they were shocked by it, And also this angel that stood before them!

Now let us not lose the fact that Jesus is our focal point, the living God!

Notice what Paul says of Jesus in Hebrews 13:8, “**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**”

Our stability is found in Him because He never changes!

May we fix our eyes upon Jesus, and we will not be moved!

Let me share this song with you, I won't sing the words, but they are very catchy, and I really want to, but I don't want to hurt your ears. The song is – ***MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS!*** I am sure many of you know it, so here is how the song goes.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand

When darkness veils his lovely face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

His oath, his covenant, his blood
Supports me in the 'whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay . . .

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in his righteousness alone
Faultless to stand before the throne

On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand

- Robert Critchley

Our lives are given to the One who conquered death and paid in full the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary!

Everything else is shaking, it is like sinking sand and the only One who can pull you out of that mire of sin you are in is Jesus and we are celebrating His resurrection today! But, like I have said, we should celebrate it every day, it is that important!

As we read on, we are going to see a group of people who are shaking in fear and another group who feared the body of their Lord was stolen, it was missing!

VERSES 4-6

Keep in mind that these Roman soldiers were elite fighting men, the finest fighting force known at that time and as they felt the earth move under their feet, as they saw this angel standing before them, they shook in fear.

The Greek word that is used for “**shook**” here has the same root as “**earthquake**” in verse 2.

These guys were shaking in fear of this angel, and they fell to the ground like dead men! They were paralyzed with fear you might say!

Why were they paralyzed with fear?

I think it was the awesome power of purity that exposed their dark hearts! Notice again what verse 3 says of this angel. “**His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.**”

In regard to this Spurgeon wrote, “**He does not appear to have drawn a flaming sword, nor even to have spoken to *the keepers*; but the presence of perfect purity overawed these rough legionaries.**”

And Clarke has this to add, “**The resurrection of Christ is a subject of *terror* to the servants of sin, and a subject of consolation to the sons of God; because it is a proof of the resurrection of both, the one to shame and everlasting contempt - the other to eternal glory and joy.**”

Now think about that for a minute, put this into perspective.

That is what happened as they stood before this angel and can you imagine what it would be like to stand before the Lord in your own righteousness, which are like filthy rags!

And yet people feel that when they die, they will be able to talk to the Lord apart from receiving that saving grace that has been extended to them.

Let me be clear on this. There is no way you will be able to stand before the Lord in your own righteousness and you will not be able to defend your rejection of Jesus. The only question will be, “*What have you done with My Son, Jesus Christ?*”

And the only reason that question will be asked of you is because you are standing in your own righteousness.

But for believers, we are dressed appropriately to stand before the King of kings and Lord of lords!

In II Corinthians 5:21 Paul tells us what Jesus has done for us. He wrote, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [endued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the righteousness of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].**”

And lastly, The Living Bible said this, **“For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God's goodness into us!”**

Keep in mind that Jesus was not a sinner, but He paid in full all of our sins, took the punishment that was due us and in return He gave to us His righteousness!

Now, back to our story here. At this point I think these soldiers ran for their lives; I don't think they were around when the women arrived at the tomb.

So as these women arrive at the tomb this angel appears to them and in seeing these women he says to them, **“Do not be afraid . . .”**

Why do you think that this angel said that to these women?

Because they were afraid!

What were they afraid of?

As I have said, maybe the reason they were fearful is because they saw the stone rolled away, the guards gone and, in their minds, they must have been thinking that someone came and stole the body of Jesus.

So their fear was different. I don't believe they were fearful of the angel but of the circumstances they now found themselves in.

Then we see this angel invite them into the empty tomb, well, it was not completely empty.

You see, Luke tells us that as they went into the tomb they saw **“two men [who] stood by them in shinning garments.”** Luke 24:4.

Here is something you might not have seen but I think it is awesome. I see these two angelic beings on either side of where the body of Jesus was laying and the picture that is painted for me is that of the Ark of the Covenant.

You see, on either side of the Ark of the Covenant were two cherubim or angelic beings.

The lid on the Ark was the Mercy Seat.

Inside the Ark were the Ten Commandments.

And once a year, on the Day of Atonement the High Priest would enter and sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed lamb upon the Mercy Seat for his sins and the sins of the nation.

The Law condemned us, but God's mercy sprinkled with blood covers our sins!

The Bible tells us that Jesus is our Mercy Seat and it is His shed blood that we find atonement for our sins. And like I have said, on either side of this tomb were the angels just like we see with the Ark of the Covenant.

I love what the angel tells these women, "**He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord lay.**"

As these women were told that Jesus is risen, they now remembered the words of Jesus, what He told them.

I think it was very important that they saw the empty tomb, that the Lord had risen. They saw it with their eyes, and we need to see it with our eyes of faith.

You see, before you can go and tell others of Jesus you have to come and see, you have to taste that the Lord is good in a sense. Once that is done you can go and tell others. We will see that as we read on in a few minutes.

Let me add this and get you to think about this for a minute.

In the Scriptures we see a few people that were raised from the dead and now once again we see that Jesus was raised from the dead.

What is the difference between those who were brought back to life in the Scriptures and what Jesus accomplished?

Think about this for a minute.

Each of them was raised in the same body they died in and raised from the dead to eventually die again.

You might say that they were resuscitated but not resurrected.

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead guess what?

He was eventually going to die again!

Resurrection isn't just living again; it is not just being resuscitated, it is living again in a new body, based on our old body, perfectly suited for life in eternity.

Yes, Jesus was not the first one brought back from the dead, but He was the first one resurrected.

And I do want to focus on this point of the resurrection of Jesus because many reject it, they don't think it is important.

But if Christ is not risen from the dead then we are still dead in our trespasses and sins.

That is not my thought or idea, it is what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:17.

So this is important to our faith, if the tomb is not empty, if this is a lie, then we have no hope. Our faith is empty. All we have is a crucified Christ and thus, no hope of resurrection life!

But again, listen to what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:20, "**But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.**"

Now some may argue, what proof is that?

Okay, if you reject the Bible then I guess it is not proof, so let me just give you a couple of points regarding the resurrection of Jesus and we can spend years looking at this evidence, but I will give you a few.

Now this is just obvious, but J. P. Moreland makes this important point.

He wrote,

The disciples had nothing to gain by lying and starting a new religion. They faced hardship, ridicule, hostility, and martyr's deaths. In light of this, they could have never sustained such unwavering motivation if they knew what they were preaching was a lie. The disciples were not fools and Paul was a cool-headed intellectual of the first rank. There would have been several opportunities over three to four decades of ministry to reconsider and renounce the lie.

- J. P. Moreland

How true that is. People may die for what they believe to be true, but if they know it is a lie at least one of them would have come forward in the midst of the persecution they were facing and admit it was a lie. But none did because it was the truth!

And in regard to the empty tomb, if the tomb was not empty and the body of Jesus could be found, then this would have put to death this idea of a resurrection! But the body was not found!

On this point, William Lane Craig put it like this,

When therefore the disciples began to preach the resurrection in Jerusalem and people responded, and when religious authorities stood helplessly by, the tomb must have been empty. The simple fact that the Christian fellowship, founded on belief in Jesus' resurrection, came into existence and flourished in the very city where he was executed and buried is powerful evidence for the historicity of the empty tomb.

- William Lane Craig

Again, that should just make sense. It was not a faraway country that this took place in, but it was in Jerusalem where the church began and thus, if they could have found the body of Jesus then this would have been done with, but they couldn't.

Even the Jewish religious leaders knew the body was gone but since they did not believe He rose from the grave, they made up a story that someone stole the body of Jesus. Yes, these fearful men of Jesus stole His body from the Roman soldiers who were on duty. No way!

And there is so much more we can look at. Like the over 500 witnesses that saw the risen Christ and Paul tells us in I Corinthians chapter 15 that many of them were still alive when he wrote that letter to the Corinthians.

Why did he say that?

Because if they doubted what Paul was saying about the resurrection of Jesus then they could go and get eyewitness testimony, they can speak with someone who saw the risen Lord!

I hope that makes sense and again we can look at more of the evidence that is out there, and we will touch on this again in a little bit, but if you don't want to believe, you won't even if Jesus stood right before you!

VERSES 7-8

Let me say this because it is so important and if we get the order messed up, what we say will be empty.

Notice that these women were told first of all to "*Come and see.*" In other words, come and see the empty tomb, come and see that He is risen.

And then these women were told to "*Go and tell.*"

Before you can win anyone to Christ you must “*Come and see.*” Before you can share about Jesus you have to be saved or your words will be empty and really, what Jesus are you sharing with them.

And the news that the angels gave to these women, the Lord gives to us.

Once we come to know Him, we can go and tell of Him to others.

There are those that are speaking for Christ, but they don’t know Him and how sad is that. And in the end, are they giving the people the Jesus of the Scriptures? I doubt it.

Now listen once again what these women were told here in verse 7 of Matthew chapter 28, “**And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold I have told you.**” Matthew 28:7.

Why Galilee? Because that is where the disciples will get the Great Commission towards the end of this chapter to go out into all the world with the Gospel message.

His appearance to the disciples in Galilee was still down the road but these were words of comfort and direction to His men that were completely fulfilled.

Now keep in mind that there are forty days from the resurrection of Jesus Christ until His ascension into heaven from the Mount of Olives.

VERSES 9-10

Now I don’t believe that Mary Magdalene was with them here.

Remember that Mary Magdalene went on ahead of the other women and she discovered the stone rolled away and the empty tomb.

So she ran to tell Peter and John what had happened while the other women were coming to the tomb.

So the other Mary and Salome are leaving to go and tell the disciples what they were told, that Jesus is risen!

And as they walked in obedience, they encountered the Lord and worshiped Him.

For these women, when they saw the risen Lord, they were convinced in their hearts that He is risen!

The angel's proclamation of the resurrection, the empty tomb that they had seen, but they not only saw those things, but they touched the risen Lord, His glorified body and now we see that they worshiped Him, the One they loved so much, and He loved them!

Again, I do realize that there are some who try to deny the resurrection, but when you look at the evidence for it, the eyewitness accounts, you can't deny it.

You see, if you do then our whole court system would be a mess or more of a mess than it already is.

We go by eyewitness accounts and yet, when it comes to the resurrection of Jesus, many like to deny it!

This is so important. Let me just share one more thing with you regarding the resurrection.

Listen to what Wilbur Smith said regarding the resurrection. He wrote,

The simple truth is that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a well-attested fact of history. He presented Himself alive to His disciples after His passion by many infallible proofs. Think of these specific instances when He appeared to His own:

1. To Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11).
2. To the women (Matt. 28:8-10).
3. To Peter (Luke 24:34).
4. To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32).
5. To the disciples, except Thomas (John 20:19-25).
6. To the disciples, including Thomas (John 20:26-31).
7. To the seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21).
8. To over 500 believers (I Cor. 15:6).
9. To James (I Cor. 5:7).
10. To the disciples on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:3-12).

One of the great foundation stones, unshakable and unmovable, of our Christian faith, is the historic evidence for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here you and I can stand and do battle for the faith because we have a situation which cannot be contradicted. It can be denied, but it cannot be disproved.

- Believers Bible Commentary, p. 1312

The evidence is there, and it is now up to each person to accept it or reject it but if you reject the truth, you will die in your sins.

For these women, they believed and the evidence for their faith was they worshiped the Lord and so should we!

And I want you to also notice that Jesus told them to “**Rejoice!**”

Why did He tell them that?

Well, they were a little fearful but now that death was conquered, that the crucified Christ has now become the resurrected Christ, they were to look beyond the cross and look at the risen Lord!

And if you can't rejoice in that, then something is wrong, and you are probably looking at the crucified Christ instead of the risen Christ!

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 8:11, "**But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**"

Because the Holy Spirit is given to each believer when they are born again, every Christian has within themselves a principle higher and more powerful than the flesh.

And think about this for a minute. At the cross Jesus died for all of our sins, but in the Resurrection, it is now that the Holy Spirit indwells us.

What is my point?

My point is this. Are you living trying to accomplish things on your own, in the flesh or by the power of God's Spirit living in you? Which side of the cross are you living on?

We can only live out these lives with the bodies that are made of flesh by the power of God's Spirit working in us and through us.

And then, it is up to us to obey what the Lord is showing us through His Word and by His Spirit or reject it!

Also, if you are looking to the cross and only the cross, your life will be a drag. Okay, I am dating myself with that word, but it is true. No joy, no life because you don't understand that Jesus' resurrection not only gives me hope for the future, but it gives to me joy right here and now!

Also, what we see here is that Paul is showing us how we are when we have crucified the flesh, put the old man to death. We are then alive in the Spirit and because of that, the things we do in the Spirit are pleasing to God.

You see, by the power of the Holy Spirit we are completely new.

Listen to what Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

Also, it is the Holy Spirit that indwells us, and bears witness to us that we are saved; we have been adopted into the family of God.

Paul, in Romans 8:16 tells us this fact as he says, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”**

On the other hand, if the Spirit of God is not in you, then the Spirit of Christ is not in you, and you are not saved, you are still lost in your sins.

So what is the identifying mark of a believer?

I believe it is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and as the Holy Spirit indwells us the characteristics of Jesus will flow through us; like love, compassion, joy, forgiveness, kindness, gentleness, self-control, and-so-on.

What is controlling your life?

Jesus put it like this in John 13:34-35, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**

It truly is the fruit of the Spirit that is produced in our lives as the Holy Spirit indwells us!

William MacDonald put it like this, “**When a person is born again, he is no longer *in the flesh but in the Spirit*. He lives in a different sphere. Just as a fish lives in water and a man lives in the air, so a believer lives in the Spirit. He not only lives in the Spirit, but the Spirit lives in him. In fact, if he is not indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**”

Absolutely, that is how it should be!

And this should just make sense. As we come into this relationship with Jesus by His Spirit, our lives should be radically changed.

Of this D. L. Moody tells us of his conversion experience, “*I was in a new world. The next morning the sun shone brighter and the birds sang sweeter. . . . The old elms waved their branches for joy, and all nature was at peace.*”

You see, we truly look at life differently through the eyes of Jesus and the new life He has given to us. May we not lose sight of that and return to the old ways, the old view of life for Jesus truly enriches our life!

Listen again to Romans 8:11 and what the Lord has for us.

Paul wrote, “**But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**And if the Spirit of Him Who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, [then] He Who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also restore to life your mortal (short-lived, perishable) bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.**”

God has given a promise to all who receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, a spiritual resurrection not in the future, but here and now!

Thus, if the Holy Spirit makes our spirit alive, then also by the Holy Spirit the flesh will be and is crucified. It is a spiritual resurrection now!

And I understand, we still drag around this flesh, and it does try to resurrect itself from time to time, but God has given us a new life in Christ by His Spirit, may we walk accordingly.

Not only that, but we look forward to a future, to another promise, a future physical resurrection for our mortal bodies.

Remember, flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God and thus, something must happen to these bodies.

That is what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 15:53-57, **“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Paul also speaks of this physical resurrection of our mortal bodies in Romans 8:23 where he tells us, **“Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”**

Two precious promises of God, one for us now, a spiritual resurrection and one in the future, a physical resurrection of these bodies of flesh as God prepares for us a new body for our spirit and soul to dwell in.

The resurrection of Jesus is the most important event in the history of the world. Yes, Jesus needed to pay in full the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary, the shedding of His blood for our sins. And apart from that we are guilty before God.

But without the resurrection of Jesus, there is no hope for the future, no hope for man. We need to live on this side of the cross, the resurrection side so that our lives are filled with the joy of the Lord!

May we remember all that Jesus has done for us, from the cross to the empty tomb!