

Celebration at the Sepulcher

Luke 24: 1-9

Today we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. For many of us, this is a very familiar story. I am certainly thankful for the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf as He died upon the cross. Had He not been willing to die, bearing our sin, we would yet be in sin and condemned of God. However, if the cross had been the end for Jesus, He would have been like all the others who had died before Him. He would yet remain in the grave and we would have no hope of resurrection or eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus separates Him from all others. Their bodies remained in the grave after death, but Jesus came forth victorious over death and the grave. Through His triumphant resurrection, the children of God have assurance of life beyond death throughout eternity with our Lord.

As I considered this familiar account in Scripture, I was touched by the emotion it reveals. This was no doubt a very difficult time for those who had embraced Jesus as the Christ. Their hopes were shattered as Jesus died upon the cross and His lifeless body was placed within the tomb. Our text today reveals the journey of Mary Magdalene and the other women who accompanied her to the sepulcher. Their journey that faithful morning reveals the journey all believers travel as they come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. As we look at the passage before us, I want to examine the [phases](#) of this journey as we consider: [Celebration at the Sepulcher](#).

I. A Time of Dread (1-4) – [Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. \[2\] And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. \[3\] And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. \[4\] And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.](#) Imagine the agony these have endured waiting for the opportunity to properly care for the body of Jesus. These faithful women had stood at the foot of the cross. They had heard the words Jesus spoke and witnessed the great suffering and pain He endured. They watched intently as He breathed His last and willingly gave His life in death. They watched the soldiers remove His lifeless body from the cross. It is likely they accompanied the body to the tomb and saw the stone rolled before the entrance, sealing it fast.

- Now, Sunday morning has arrived. The women are making their way to the tomb, bringing with them spices to anoint the body of Jesus. They were not expecting life. They were heading to the cemetery to provide a proper burial. There was nothing joyful or jubilant about their journey that morning as of yet.

- We find they were much perplexed as they arrived at the sepulcher, finding the stone rolled away and the body of Jesus no longer in the tomb. This has the idea of “*being filled with great doubt and extreme hesitation.*” What could have possibly happened? They knew His body had been placed within the tomb. The stone had sealed the sepulcher and a Roman guard had been placed to keep watch over it. The women found themselves in great dismay standing at the sepulcher. They were not expecting life in a cemetery for the dead.

- I am sure we all can relate to the journey of the women so far. Dealing with death is a natural part of living. However, I also realized a great spiritual truth regarding their journey up to this point. Prior to coming to Christ in salvation, being delivered from sin and reconciled to God, we were all traveling this same path. It was a path leading toward the cemetery with no hope of life or peace. Our lives were filled with pain, despair, and doubt, leaving no hope or assurance for the future. Like these women, we wondered where life would lead and how we would endure. Death seemed to be the expected and final end.

II. A Time of Discovery (5-6a) – *And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?* ^[6] *He is not here, but is risen.* As the women made their way into the sepulcher, they encountered two men in shining garments: angels. Knowing their despair and dread, the angels questioned why they were seeking one who lived among the dead. A sepulcher is no place to find one who is alive. They shared the glorious good news that Jesus was no longer dead within the tomb, but He had risen victoriously in life, conquering death and the grave.

- This has to be one of the most profound statements in all of Scripture. He is not here, but is risen. At that moment, the women began to process the good news they received. Jesus was alive! Their doubt and dread began to be replaced with hope and jubilation. They had been confronted with the good news of the Gospel.

- I remember the time in my spiritual journey when I arrived at this point. I had heard the accounts of the gospels many times, but it was a wonderful day when I discovered Jesus had risen from the dead and through His victorious life I could be saved and experience life eternal through Him as well. I came to a place where I realized Christians were not serving the memory or honor of one who had lived and done great things. They were serving One who conquered death, sin, and hell as He rose in victory! It is a glorious day when one comes to the realization that Jesus is no longer dead within the grave, but that He rose and wants all to look to Him by faith so they too can experience eternal life!

III. A Time of Deliverance (6b-8) – *remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,* ^[7] *Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.* ^[8] *And they remembered his words.* The angels reminded the women of the instructions

Jesus left them prior to His crucifixion. He warned them that He would be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men. He told them He would be crucified and die, but His death would not be the end. He had promised He would rise again from the grave triumphant. With that the women remembered the words Jesus had spoken. They realized He had risen just as He said He would. Jesus had in fact conquered death and was not bound by its icy grip of destruction.

- This had to bring a sense of peace and assurance to them as well. They maybe didn't comprehend it all at this point, but eventually they would realize the abundance Jesus provided through His resurrection. By believing in Jesus by faith, they too would be delivered from grip of death. Surely it would eventually come, but it would not be the end for them either. Jesus had conquered death, and all who come to Him in salvation are delivered from death as well.

- I rejoice that I too have experienced this third phase in the journey. Prior to Christ my life was filled with fear, doubt, and dread. I had no hope for the future and no assurance of life beyond death. Through the tender pleading of the Holy Spirit, I made a profound discovery: Jesus was no longer dead within the tomb, but He had risen in victory. I also came to the place where I realized He wanted me to experience victory through Him. The bonds of sin had me bound in sin and death. I was separated from God with no hope of escape. However, the moment I believed on Christ, repented of my sin, and embraced salvation by faith, I was delivered from condemnation and the eternal death it brings. Just as Christ rose again in resurrection life, I too was resurrected a new creature in Him. At that moment I died to sin and self, and was made alive in Jesus Christ! [John 11:25 – Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:](#) [Rom.6:5 – For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:](#) [1 Peter 1:3 – Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.](#) [2 Cor.5:17 – Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.](#)

- All believers can rejoice in the spiritual resurrection that comes through a relationship with Christ. We are delivered from sin and death in Him. There is another great benefit and hope we must consider as well. We know the Bible teaches that it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. Death is certain for all, unless the Lord returns very soon. However, death is not the end for the child of God. Paul declares for the believer to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. These mortal bodies will be laid to rest in the dust of the earth from whence they came, but there is coming a resurrection of the dead as well. [1 Thess.4:13-18 – But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.](#) ^[14] [For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.](#) ^[15] [For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.](#) ^[16] [For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:](#) ^[17] [Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up](#)

together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. ^[18]
Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

IV. A Time of Declaration (8-9) – And they remembered his words, ^[9] And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It would have been impossible for the women to have remained silent about their encounter. They had went to the sepulcher that morning filled with dread, dismay, and doubt, but left with renewed hope and assurance for the future. Jesus was alive! All He said was true. The hopes of the believers were not buried within the tomb, but He was alive and well. They had to publicly proclaim what they experienced.

- There is a great truth and challenge for us in this as well. It is impossible to encounter the risen Lord in salvation and remain silent about it. If someone as big and glorious as Jesus invades your heart and life, you will be compelled to tell others! I know that some are more vocal than others, but I am very suspicious of those who claim to be a Christian but refuse to publicly proclaim their salvation or identify with the Lord.
- Just as the women, we too have an obligation to share the good news with others. This news was too exciting and important to keep to themselves. They knew the disciples needed to hear of the resurrection, as well as all who would listen. Today as we celebrate the resurrection, we are reminded of the great price Jesus paid and the victory He secured for all who will respond by faith. We have received the message this world desperately needs to hear. I pray we are reminded of all we have received and are compelled to share with others who have not yet encountered Christ in salvation. Let us proclaim the good news of the Gospel: Jesus died for the sin of humanity, but He rose triumphant in victory. There is forgiveness of sin, reconciliation to God, and eternal life in Jesus Christ!

Conclusion: We have discussed a passage of Scripture most of us know well. I rejoice for the day that this passage became real and personal in my life. I am thankful for the salvation I have received through the provision of Christ. Have you believed in Christ by faith? Have you responded to His call in salvation? He died so you might be forgiven of sin. His triumphant resurrection provides eternal life for all those who come to Him by faith. If you have not responded to the call of Christ in salvation, I can think of no better time to do so. Why not believe, respond to the call of Christ, and be saved today!

Christian, have you contemplated all you have received lately? Is the joy there as it once was? Do you feel compelled to share the Gospel with others as the women did on that resurrection morning? If not, I urge you to come and seek the Lord to renew your passion for Him as you strive to share the good news with others who desperately need to hear!