

## **“He is Not Here, but Has Risen!”**

Sunrise 03-31-13

The crucifixion of Jesus had caused earth's Darkest Day. Even the light of sun had been hidden from view while Jesus was dying. Some of the women in the Easter story had been at the foot of the cross and watched Him suffer. After He'd died, they watched as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Jesus' body down, wrapped Him in linen cloths and put Him in a new tomb no one had ever laid in before. This helped the women know exactly where to go that first Easter.

But because the Sabbath was going to begin in a few hours, the women knew Joseph and Nicodemus had only done the minimum preparation for the body. They'd anointed the Lord's body, but since it was done in haste, it still needed to be completed.

But their work was going to be delayed because of the Sabbath. But, as early as they could, they went to the tomb! It was still dark that early morning. They met together as a group and made their way to the tomb.

You've got to admire the devotion, and courage of these women. How they loved Jesus, their Teacher and Savior! He had to have a proper burial! It was the least they could do! They didn't fear the darkness or fear being identified as some of Christ's followers. We've also gotten up early this morning and come to this place for a different reason, because we know how the story ends! We're here to praise our Risen Savior!

Turn to Luke 24, page 884. The women had seen the large stone that was rolled across the opening. They knew it would a problem for them, but they'd deal with that when they returned. Imagine the dark despair that must have swept over the followers of Jesus. They had heard Him preach and had seen the miracles and healings He'd performed. But then to see Him die and be buried had to be very difficult. In all of their worry and sadness, they'd forgotten and maybe even doubted His promise He would rise from dead.

Look at verses 1-3, *“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”* This move by the women to go into the tomb was not only a bold one, but also an act of love, care, and faith! They didn't even waste any time asking each other, *“I wonder who rolled the stone away, or why did they do it?”*

The big issue wasn't that the stone had been rolled away, but that Jesus wasn't there! While they were still trying to deal with this, look at verses 4-6 and see what happened, *“While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen!”*

Those words of the angels, should have been an *“aha”* moment for the women, but they weren't! They should have remembered what Jesus had told them. But the angels had to remind them. Look at the end of verse 6 through verse 8, *“Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”* And they remembered his words.”

Aren't we many times just like the women? Jesus has said, *“I will never leave you or forsake you”*, but we wonder if He's there and if He cares about us. Jesus said, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love”*, but we see our sins, our denial of Him, and we don't see how He could still love us! But He showed His love for us as He suffered and died in our place. If death had been the end, the true purpose of His coming wouldn't be completed!

Jesus' whole purpose of coming to earth was to suffer and die in our place but then to rise again to show us He had power over sin, death, and the devil. This was and is a message of true joy for all mankind! It's a message that needs to be shared!

And that's exactly what the women did! Look at verses 9-10, *"and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles."*

The announcement of the women to the disciples was not only that the stone had been rolled away, but that Jesus was not in the tomb because He had risen! The response of the disciples was less than positive! They thought the women were crazy!

Look at verses 11-12, *"but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened."*

Jesus had returned to life in power and glory and had passed not only through the graveclothes but the tomb itself! He didn't even need the stone rolled away to rise! The angel had rolled the stone away so that those who came to the tomb might believe! Verse 12 tells us Peter believed in Jesus' resurrection because of the evidence he saw, and later that evening, he, along with the rest of the disciples, would meet Christ personally!

The Passion of Jesus Christ, and His death on the cross would have meant nothing if there was no resurrection! The devil thought he'd won! Jesus had died on the cross. His limp, lifeless body was removed from the cross, and laid in a tomb secured, sealed, and guarded by Roman Soldiers! Yet, "Surprise"! Death, and the grave couldn't hold Jesus Christ, the Son of God! He had the authority to lay down His life, and He had the authority to take it again!

Listen to Jesus' words from John 11:25-26, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

On that first Easter Morning, the women and the disciples of Christ would see and witness the glorified body of our Lord. They believed and would want to go and tell the whole world. Are you following their example? Do you believe?

As you think about the scene at the tomb, how do you see it? Are you puzzled over how the resurrection could have happened? Or have you experienced that "aha" moment of belief? This is the day to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's victory over sin and Satan was complete as He died on the cross for you! His resurrection proves it!

Just as you see the light of the day coming this morning, also see the Light of the One who is the Light of the world coming in all His glory! His name is Jesus Christ – the Son of God – the Risen King! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!