

# The Resurrection Changes Everything

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good evening, everybody. Good evening. He is risen. Amen. If you don't know me, if you're visiting with us this evening, my name is Aaron, and I look after the service, and we are looking at Matthew 28. Matthew is one of the four descriptions we have of Jesus' resurrection. And what's really fascinating about Matthew's description is that he doesn't seem to very interested in the mechanics of the resurrection. And also, he doesn't seem to try and present us much in the way of evidence for the resurrection. Other accounts we have of this, we have Jesus appearing before hundreds of people to say, you can believe this really happened. Look, he was in front of all these hundreds of people. You can believe this. But Matthew's focus doesn't seem to be on evidence, and it doesn't seem to be on the mechanics of it. Now, Matthew's focus is on the implications of the resurrection, the implications for our life. But before we talk about that, let's walk through the story very quickly, and then come back to what I think is a couple of the really big points. So first, a bit of a walkthrough. So the two Marys are heading to the tomb, and they are probably devastated. And they're going to the tomb to honor this man that they loved.

And there is an earthquake, just like when Christ was crucified. And an angel descends, and he rolls back the stone, and he sat on it, and he sits on the stone, right? He rolls it back, and he sits on the stone. And I love that detail. I love that detail. The stone represented like the closed door of death. And here's the angel. It's just like a stool. It's just like, that's the kind of respect he has for that, you know? He just sits on it. It's brilliant. So he's rolled the stone away. And remember, he's rolled the stone away not to let Jesus out. Jesus, he's gone. He's rolled the stone away so the woman can go in and see Jesus is not there. And the guards, they see all this.

And the passage says they become like dead men. There's another great detail in the passage. The man who is dead is now alive. And the alive are like dead men.

And it says they're trembling in verse 4. And here's another really great detail. The trembling word is the Greek word for earthquake. So the earthquake, there's this massive earthquake when the angel comes, massive earthquake. And then these, and the women are really delighted to hear about Jesus. And the guards are lying on the ground having their own little private earthquake.

That's the trembling word. It's the earthquake word. Anyway, so we're moving along here. So the angel says, Jesus has risen. And the woman here become the first ever preachers of the gospel.

[ 3 : 14 ] And they run and they tell the disciples. And on the way, Jesus meets them and he says, hello. And it's wonderful. Because in the original language that's, you see in the ESV, it says, and Jesus says, greetings. It's the most casual hello. If the Bible was written in New Zealandish, it would be the woman are running to tell the disciples and Jesus pops out, just pops out in front of them and says, g'day. And that's that. And that's all we get about that conversation.

Maybe that was the whole thing. We don't know. Meanwhile, the guards take off. So as the woman are going to tell the good news, be the first preachers of the gospel, the guards are running in another direction to tell the chief priests what's happened.

And the chief priests chat amongst themselves and agree to cover up the resurrection. And the religious leaders say to the guards, they say, listen, we can't, you can't tell people what really happens.

You just, just say you fell asleep and actually say this. Say you fell asleep and the disciples stole Jesus' body. Just tell them that. In fact, we'll pay you lots of money if you tell people that.

Now you may be wondering, why do they have to tell the guard, why do they have to pay the guards lots of money? Because admitting when you're a guard, admitting that you fell asleep on duty, that's really bad. Like the major part of your job is just being conscious, right?

[ 4 : 42 ] That's the, that's the big part of the job. Be conscious. And they have to tell people that they weren't conscious and lose all respect. Actually, for some people it was a death penalty. It was

like inexcusable, that kind of thing. Ruined reputation. So, so there's that little episode. Then the next little episode, Jesus arrives in Galilee and he's with his disciples and he says to them, let me tell you what happened.

I've been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Now go make disciples of all nations. I'll be with you. So there you go. That's the flyover. Now let's look at what I think are the major points here. So first major point is this. Since the resurrection, something about Jesus has changed. Something about Jesus has changed. He meets the disciples and the first words are for them are this. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

So what's changed? That's what's changed. And what does that mean? Jesus had authority, obviously. Earthly ministry had authority. He had authority over disease and sickness and evil and stuff. But the Bible describes that part of Jesus' life, his earthly ministry, as a son of God in weakness. Jesus existed with these self-imposed limitations. But now God, after the crucifixion and resurrection, hands over the governance of the universe into the son's hands. And Romans describes Jesus in this place as the son of God in power. So all authority he's been given.

Universal, unconditional authority. This means there is no individual, there is no people group, there is no organization that does not come under the authority of Jesus. So the subsistence farmer in a developing nation, the wealthy banker living in a high rise, the atheist, the person who believes in new age beliefs, whatever you believe, wherever you live, whatever political system you live under, Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord. That's the first point. At the resurrection, there is a change. God hands over all governance of the universe, of heaven and earth, into the son's hands. Second point. This is very interesting. The first thing Jesus does with his authority is what? Look at it. He sends us out. He's given all authority. And the first thing he does is he sends us out. I'll read the passage to you. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that has been commanded you. The first thing he does is to transfer his mission to us, to the church. And if you remember Lord of the Rings, when Frodo offers Galadriel the ring, the ring of power, and she says, as she thinks about what that would be like to have that kind of power, she says, instead of a dark lord, you would have a queen, beautiful and terrible as the dawn, treacherous as the sea, stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me in despair. It's a great scene. But it's all about what having power would mean for her.

She describes, if I had that power, this is what it would mean for me. And Jesus could have talked about that. He could have talked about what it would mean to have all authority, what that would mean for him. But the shock is he doesn't. He just talks about the implications for us straight away, for the disciples, for us as readers today. And it's this, go, go on and make disciples.

[ 8 : 54 ] And it's very important to understand this. So let's just unpack a few of these words here. In that little paragraph I read, the only imperative statement, the only like command statement is make disciples. That's the big, that's the big sort of verb, make disciples. It's not grow your church.

It's not go out and make converts, which is interesting. It's make disciples. You notice he doesn't say go and reform society. He doesn't say go transform culture. Now, should we be engaged in all of those things? Absolutely. Of course we should be. But that's not what he says here.

The first thing he says after we've been given all authority on heaven and earth is make disciples. And what can we say about that? Well, a disciple is someone who is attached to a teacher.

A disciple is a lifelong learner. They understand they never arrive. A disciple is somebody who who will never reach the stage where they think they have nothing to learn. What else can we say about that? You know, when hearing this, it's easy to sort of be tempted to think about discipleship making in terms of being at the receiving end of it. But we should be at the giving end of it as well.

It doesn't say just be a disciple. It says make disciples. We should receive discipleship. Of course we should. But we should be involved in the work of making disciples. And there's a lot to do there.

[ 10 : 36 ] And all of us can participate there in some way. So we have one imperative. Make disciples. And that's broken down into three different ways of doing that. Three different examples that Christ gives. He says to make disciples, we do that by going, by baptizing, and by teaching.

Let's have a think about those very quickly. What does the going thing mean? Going. Well, that's intent, isn't it? It's intent. It's, you know what it is? It's inconvenience. It's inconvenience.

It can mean giving real thought to structuring your life around how you can do this and how you can participate in this in your life. Baptizing. Well, that's how we identify as believers. It's the visible

symbol of what's happened to you. That's why we do it. And lastly, teaching. It's why we, it's why you come to church. It's why we, it's why we, it's why you listen to sermons online. It's, it's why you go to Bible studies. It's part of making disciples. It's, and the aim of all this learning that we do here is not to just, you know, it's not so we think we can master everything. It's so our lives will be different. It's so we'll be transformed people. Okay. Let me summarize for a moment here. After the resurrection, there is a change. Jesus has been given all authority over heaven and earth. And the first thing he does is he transfers his mission to us. Now, how's that going to go, do we think, as we think about this for us, you know? How's it going to go?

How's the discipleship making venture going to pan out? Well, the passage gives us sort of good news and bad news. I'll give you the bad news first. The bad news is, well, it's not really bad news. It's just, I think the passage wants us to not be naive about the task before us. Interestingly, Matthew's gospel, the largest, the longest gospel, the second to last paragraph in Matthew's gospel, the second to last paragraph is about how the religious leaders try to cover up the truth of the resurrection. Have you noticed that? And it's quite a bit of detail there. Let's talk about the conversations they had. This story is given a very prominent place. And why would that be? And I think the big thing here is the reason Matthew gives us this little vignette, this little story gives it such a prominent place in the gospel is to remind us that opposition is real and it's the order of the day. The powerful opposed Jesus right to the very end, despite an angelic visit, despite a very clearly risen Christ, these powerful people did not want to follow him. Instead, they try to discredit the disciples. They just try to discredit Jesus. And it's all terribly ironic because in the previous chapter, the religious leaders, they go to Pilate and they say, we are really, really worried about the disciples stealing the body. Let's make sure that doesn't happen. So let's get a big boulder over there and put a whole lot of guards around Jesus.

[13:58] We are really worried about them stealing the body. And here they try to cover up the resurrection by advancing the very story they wanted to prevent. I'll say that clearer. They were so worried about someone stealing the body, they had guards watching the tomb. Now they're so worried about the resurrection, they want everyone to think the guards failed and the body was stolen. The deception's awful, but what's worse is just the defiance. They are so resistant to Jesus, despite the evidence.

They are so convinced of their moral position, they are happy to do the immoral to cover it up. Okay, what am I trying to say here? Jesus was opposed as a baby by Herod and their opposition never let up. And we are his followers and he has given us a mission and we should not be naive about opposition. That people are going to think we're crazy and worse.

Okay, lastly, that's the bad news, good news. Christ has risen. He has been given all authority and the first thing he does is send us out to make disciples, knowing that we'll face opposition. And as you think about that, so I think about this, how could I even begin to attempt this task?

Why do I even think that we could pull this off? Why do we think we could do this? You know, one of the major themes of the Bible, and this is just one more example of it, is this. God sends reluctant and inadequate men and women out to fulfill the commission.

But he sends them out with the assurance of his presence. This is the good news. Look at the very last line of Matthew's whole gospel. It's this. Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

[16:03] Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. It's just perhaps one of the most encouraging verses in the whole Bible. And it takes us right back to the start of Matthew's gospel.

Matthew 1.20, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. The whole gospel is bookended, enveloped by this incredible thought that Jesus is with us and always will be with us.

And I hope that is a comfort, that's a comfort and encouragement to you as you journey in your discipleship through failure and success and sorrow and joy and darkness and light, that Jesus is with you. Just before I finish, I want to acknowledge that you might be here this evening as a guest and might not be a Christian. And I don't know what you thought about all of this.

I know in our cultural moment, some of the words of Matthew's gospel are offensive. And I want to acknowledge that. They are a shock in our time. For example, Jesus makes commands.

Worse than that, he says we should impose our views on others. And Jesus says he has the right to do this because he's in charge of everything. I mean, this is an absolute horror in our relativist, sort of utopian culture that we live in. I want to just acknowledge that some of these things might be offensive.

[ 17 : 55 ] So if you are here and you're a guest and you're not a Christian, I just want to say that, yeah, you know, what Matthew says is wonderful, but perhaps a bit culturally bizarre to hear right now.

But let me just ask this. Let me just ask this. What if it was true? What if all this was actually true? What if Jesus really did live?

And what if he really did die? And what if he actually rose again? And what if he did invite us into this incredible gospel adventure with him?

I mean, if that really happened, and there's lots of very thoughtful, robust scholarly evidence to suggest it did, if this really happened, that's the most important thing you'll probably ever hear.

So if you're a guest, and I'm not sure what you thought about all of this, all I'm going to say to you is, I just want to invite you back. Come back. Come back to church next week. You can sit in the back row.

[ 19 : 01 ] Just don't talk to anyone if you want, or talk to everyone. I don't care. But just be anonymous if you'd like. You can sit in the back row. Starting next week, we're starting with Matthew 1, verse 1.

And we're going to look at the whole story of Jesus. So I just say, come back and hear the story, and come and talk to me if you like about that. Okay, look, that's enough from me.

Ben, would you come and now pray for us? Amen.