

Resurrection Sunday

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[0 : 00] Please have a seat. Secondly, please grab your Bibles. We are going to be spending some time in John 20 looking at an aspect of the resurrection.

I don't know about you guys, but I don't know if you're the type of person when you hear about a situation, you kind of insert yourself into that situation in order to experience or understand what's going on.

I've got friends who do that with movies, right? If there's this movie, they have to be one of the characters. Sometimes it's with stories. But today I'm going to ask you to go back with me for 2,000 years.

Just think about what we would be saying on this Sunday morning. I think the first thing we'd say is, whoa, what a week.

It was just a week prior that Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Hundreds of thousands of people were in Jerusalem at that time of Passover and many of them were ready to crown Him King.

[1 : 21] The fact that we're now sitting here looking in a tomb means something desperately went wrong or went really right.

Just in that week, the Roman governor, Pilate, would be relieved. He's washed his hands of this messy affair. Herod would have asked the Roman guards to step down.

The crowds are not so excited anymore. In fact, the crowds are confused. Those that cried out for Him to be made King, many of them would be the same who would cry out for Him to be crucified. The Jewish leaders are tentatively happy. They know the fickleness of their own people. But with Jesus dead, what is there to fear?

The disciples, I think there's a word that describes them at this time. Despair. Not only have they scattered and are in hiding, but they are shattered.

[2 : 46] These are now 11 men, used to be 12, 24 hours ago, had left their homes, their families, their careers, to follow this man Jesus.

and now He's gone. How could this happen? Jesus was the future kingdom.

In fact, less than a couple of days ago, James and John were fighting about who would sit at the right hand of Jesus as He ruled. But now, Rome still rules, the Pharisees are vindicated, and if life has a bottom of the barrel, this is it.

But there's one thing that could change it all. One thing that could reverse everything that has happened in the last three days.

It's the resurrection, right? It's the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Everything pivots on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And without it, the entirety of Christianity comes tumbling down.

[4 : 20] So today, within this resurrection account found in the Gospel of John, I want us to look at four aspects of the resurrection of Jesus Christ together.

Perhaps you'll identify, perhaps you won't, but I pray that you'll learn something and be moved by this man, Jesus Christ. The first aspect that I want us to see here is the devotion that we see by Mary Magdalene.

Let's take a look at verse 1. Verse 1 says, Now, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. We know and understand that the first day of the week is Sunday. Jesus was placed on the cross Friday, we believe, by 9 a.m.

Friday morning, and he died approximately at 3 p.m. His body was then given to a man named Joseph of Merimathia, who placed him in a tomb which would have been like a cave on a side of a hill.

[5 : 34] And the reason they had to do that before is there was a rush because the Friday night, the Sabbath, which is on the Saturday, actually begins on sundown of the Friday. So Jesus would have been in the tomb by that time.

All day Saturday, silence, and now we find ourselves here Sunday morning, and we see this wonderful, beautiful picture of someone who loved Jesus very, very deeply.

Her name is Mary Magdalene. Who is she? We first learn of Mary in Luke 8, 3. She was a woman who was possessed by seven demons when Jesus encountered her.

Jesus drove those demons from her and from that point on, she became a follower of Jesus Christ. This woman knows what it is what she was saved from.

Mary is doing something that is neither duty nor routine, but devotion. she is a woman who was forgiven of her sin, who experienced great relief, great personal change, and radical transformation.

[6 : 54] The other gospels tells us that there were other several women in her entourage, all followers of Jesus. What is amazing about these women in that their devotion was deep.

Even in the darkest hour, they were still going to serve our Lord. So here they are after the crucifixion. They approach the tomb.

She comes to a scene that she had not counted on. There is no rock and there are no soldiers. Matthew records for us what happened during the night.

Matthew 28 2 says, And behold, there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

And the guards, well, they were full of fear and made like dead men. Mark records for us that Mary came along with other women to bring spices so they could anoint the body of Jesus.

[8 : 02] Scholars believe that there was such a rush to remove Jesus from the cross before the Sabbath that they hadn't done a proper burial. So Mary and her friends and their deep devotion to Jesus are coming to do it right.

Even in this defeat, nothing will keep Mary away from serving her Lord. This is why Mary was there. Can I ask you a question?

Why are you here this Sunday? is it for habit? Is it curiosity perhaps?

Maybe devotion? My goal for you is to be here because of worship. Has your life been transformed by the power of Jesus Christ?

Do you understand that you have been forgiven of much sin? Have you been delivered from the grips of Satan? Do you know Jesus as Lord?

[9 : 19] Is it gratitude? Is it loyalty? Is it devotion? devotion? My prayer is that you are not here because of some dead sense of empty devotion, but you are here because you have a love that flows with thanksgiving for your Lord and your Savior Jesus Christ.

And I hope from that heart of passion comes delight and gratitude. That's why Mary was there to serve Jesus.

What is drawing you to this tomb? So the first aspect we see is this devotion. The second aspect I want to draw your attention to is to the despair.

The despair. We see a complete contrast between Mary and the disciples. Let's take a look at verse 2.

So she being Mary ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. Now we understand him to be the author of this gospel is John.

[10 : 36] And she says they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him. The story goes from bad to worse, doesn't it?

Jesus is not only dead, but the body is missing. Notice it wasn't Peter and John, those closest to Jesus, who went to the tomb early.

It was Mary. So here they are wherever they are. Knock at the early door. He's not there. He's not there. So we read in verse 3, So Peter went out with the other disciple and they were going toward the tomb.

Both of them were running together, but the other disciple, being John, outran Peter and reached the tomb first. But take note of Mary's words in the second verse, And we do not know where they have laid them.

See, her understanding is that Jesus is still dead. Laid means the body, it's dead. The they most likely means the enemies of Jesus, the Jewish and Roman leaders who crucified him.

[11 : 52] see, what's interesting about this is that the Jewish leaders thought that it would be the disciples of Jesus Christ that would steal the body, right?

They're both thinking about what the other would do. And so, because they thought that, they posted a Roman guard. Matthew 27, 62 records, the next day, that is, after the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how the imposter said, while he was still alive, after three days I will rise.

Pay attention to the fact that it was the enemies of Jesus Christ who understood his words rather than the followers of Jesus Christ, right? They're in despair, they actually listened to him.

So they ordered the tomb to be secured lest the disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he has risen from the dead and the last fraud will be different than the first.

Many, many times Jesus said he would resurrect and this is what they feared most. You see, without the resurrection, this whole Christianity thing is absolutely meaningless.

[13 : 16] His death would just be like some other death of some other religious teacher, yet there would be no power to it. But yet, if Jesus does rise, the whole world will be turned upside down.

So the Jewish leader's greatest fear is that the body of Jesus Christ would be taken. resurrection.

It's interesting that the enemies of Jesus understood the implication of his resurrection.

The fact is, if they had the body, as many skeptics to Christianity have accused over the years that they must have taken the body or someone else would have taken the body.

Well, the fact is, if they had taken the body, they would have shown it, wouldn't they? If you want to disprove the ruse, you show the body that he is indeed dead.

That way there would be no more talk of resurrection. But Jesus rose and walked out of the tomb.

Amen? Do we really believe the disciples could have stolen the tomb?

[14 : 29] Do we really believe the disciples could have overpowered the Roman soldiers? If you think men who ran to hide behind every closed door would be powerful enough to come and overpower a Roman soldier, you're not understanding the story of when we meet these men.

These are men who cowered in total fear when Jesus was taken. In fact, when Peter himself was confronted by a preteen servant girl, but whether he was a follower, he said, no, you're crazy.

could they enact this plan? In fact, they needed to be told that the body was missing. It wasn't even on their mind that he, Jesus, would walk out of there.

If they had indeed stolen the body, would they have all died martyrs' deaths? What would be the point? You know the lie.

Why would they all go to death for something that they knew was not true? Dead bodies, as one author writes, do not inspire fishermen and tradesmen to do the great things that men, that these men, would go on to do.

[15 : 53] So we have the devotion, we have the despair, and the third aspect I want us to see here is the discovery. How did Peter and John, when they heard that Jesus, the tomb, was empty, how did they respond?

They ran. This is terrible news. Take a look at verse 4. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and he reached the tomb first. And notice that he said, in stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

John gets there first and he's peering inside. And notice the words, he saw the linen cloths lying there. What we are looking at is a crime scene.

They've arrived and they need to figure out what's going on. First off, what the body would have been laid like, it wouldn't have been like they put one piece of sheet.

What they do is they actually wrap the body up with many, many strips. They usually take these strips, dip them in spices and other perfumes, and wrap the body.

[16 : 59] Now the author is giving us a huge hint at what is going on here. In the original Greek, we actually see there's an emphasis that the author places here.

He actually says, he saw lying there the linen wraps. John wants us to understand that this is completely out of place. If you were going in to steal a body, are you going to unwrap them?

No, right? You're going to take the body. You're going to remove it yourself. But even if you did take off the wraps, you're not going to neatly put them, fold them up, and leave them there.

So there was this aspect that John is calling our attention to, which I believe that Jesus Christ just passed through them as they were when he was resurrected.

Amen? Let's take a look at verse 6. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen clothes there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloth, but folded up in a place by itself.

[18:18] You've got to love Peter, right? John kind of comes to the tomb, and he glances in. Peter just jumps right in. just goes in, and I want to call your attention to something that's very interesting that we don't pick up in the English language, and that's the nuance of the word saw.

We're going to take a look at three different aspects of it. Take a look at verse 5. This is John, and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths. The original language gives the implication that it's just a glance, right?

It's just a glance. Now Peter does something completely different, and it says, then Simon Peter came, following him, he went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there. Now this saw is quite different.

It means to gaze. It means to look with interest, with a purpose. What Peter is doing is the CSI thing, right?

He's going in. He wants to really figure out what's going on in here. John, a little bit tempted, just kind of giving that little glance. I don't want to look anymore. Peter just kind of bolts in.

[19:27] What Peter sees is this faith cloth carefully folded up. Could this be a grave robber who's done this? There is nothing here to show that there's any disarray or messiness.

The Bible is full of quotes of Jesus saying, both in private and public, that he would raise from the dead. Peter, who's going to be a good idea of God, who's going to be a good idea of God.

Why didn't they get this? Why is Peter, who'd spent the most time with Jesus Christ, not understanding this? you know what?

I don't think Peter's very unusual. I think he's a lot like us sometimes, right? We only hear what we want to hear. We only see what we want to see.

Sometimes we grab onto portions of Scripture and hold fast to them, but then other portions of Scripture we completely ignore, right? Hey, we love Jesus being full of love, right?

[20:36] We love that Jesus is love. But are we going to talk about that Jesus is holy? That Jesus is holy? That Jesus is holy?

You see, we do that subconsciously or without even thought. We gravitate to what we like rather than what we don't like. But that doesn't make it any less true.

But I want you to pay attention to this last aspect. The fourth aspect I want you to see here is the decision. It's the decision. Now look what happens in verse 8.

Then the other disciple, this is John, who had reached the tomb first. Remember, he glanced in. He says he also went in following Peter and he saw.

And notice what else he said. And he believed. You see, again, we see a different understanding of the word. Saw here. It means he saw with perception and understanding it.

[21:46] Understanding. It's true, isn't it? Sometimes we see to observe, but we don't always interpret correctly. But John comes all the way.

John is just not seeing the facts, but he's seeing the spiritual significance. He now has spiritual perception. God has opened his eyes, and guess what?

He believes. He now understands. Remember those words in John 3.16? For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever, what?

Believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the exact same belief that we're seeing here. He's getting it all.

He knows the body is not stolen. He knows that Jesus Christ has resurrected. You see, John ran to the tomb with the belief that the body was stolen, and now he knows that Jesus has risen from the dead.

[22:52] The word believe is not just believing facts, but believing the implication of who Jesus said he was. He wasn't just a man who could do miracles.

He's understanding at this point that Jesus is the Son of God. That Jesus is the real Messiah. Messiah. You see, Jesus was known by John to be a great man who could do very many miracles, who he believed to be the Messiah.

I'm sure if you would have asked him, he said, I'm sure he is who I think he is, and I could say it with a lot of confidence, but did he go all the way with what Jesus said.

Just think day by day with Jesus, hearing all his teaching, seeing all the miracles, how much more his faith would have died when Jesus hung on that cross.

Ugh. Was I fooled? Did this Jesus scam me somehow? It's not enough that he'd be confused.

[24 : 09] He'd be deeply hurt. But now he gets it. You know, it's the same thing with us, right? I can lay down all the evidence.

I can teach you everything there is to know about Jesus Christ. You can know the facts. But you know what differentiates a person who knows Jesus and believes in Jesus?

It's the same the one who believes, understand there's implications to the truth that Jesus is real.

Amen? It's coming to the understanding that I understand that my great sins have now been forgiven by the Son of God who died on this cross and I now have to respond to that truth.

It's just not understanding everything that he said or everything that he wrote. It's now understanding that my life has to change.

we can observe it, we can study it, we can read it with great interest, but that aha moment sometimes just doesn't happen.

[25 : 32] The reality is left to your own devices, you cannot interpret and come up with the right conclusion. In fact, it is a gift from God to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It is a step of faith that doesn't happen without God. I can persuade you with all sorts of arguments, but what I will do is not pray that you will just understand, but that God would open the eyes of your heart.

You see, it's the Holy Spirit of God that has to shine his understanding light upon us. Not just to believe, but to follow.

Take a look at verse 9. For as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. We know that Jesus had much more to teach them.

The Bible records that Jesus spent another 40 days walking with them through the Old Testament passages that prophesied about him. Jesus gave them greater understanding in the days ahead.

[26 : 36] Jesus showed them where he jumps off the pages of the Old Testament, the promises, the prophecies, and the response. The reality is, a resurrected Jesus Christ changes everything, does he not?

Everything changes on the fact that he rose again. Do you know Jesus? Jesus? I'm not talking about a glance.

I'm not talking about studying intently. But do you know him to the point that your entire life's direction is affected by him?

It affects how you raise your kids. It's affected how you work. It affects you how you love your husband. It affects you how you love your wife. It affects you how you respond to your parents.

Because this is what Jesus Christ came to do. He came to save you from you. The wrath that you deserve. See, Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners.

[27 : 50] He was buried on that third day and he rose from the grave. This is the greatest news that we will ever hear. That Jesus came into the world that we might go to heaven and enjoy his fellowship forever.

God raised him from the dead and because he lives we can now live forever. If you indeed know Jesus you have life.

I don't know your stories. I'm kind of new to the area. But I hope if you do want to know Jesus I pray you'll make yourself open to him.

Notice what it says in verse 10. This is just this wonderful little phrase. Then the disciples went back to their homes. Why would they do that?

When you want to be found where do you go? you go home, right? It's the same way with us. If we want to be found by Jesus Christ it begins with our prayer.

[29 : 09] Father may you come to me. Open my eyes. I understand that I'm a savior and I understand that I desperately need you. Without you I'm caught in my brokenness.

I'm caught in my rebelliousness. I'm caught in my foolishness. I'm caught in there's nothing I can do to earn you. In fact the greatest lie upon this world and I was just talking to someone the other day.

Hey I'm going to rely on my good works. And I don't know how many times I hear that. Good according to who? I guarantee you you come to me and you say hey I've got good works.

I guarantee you I can show you someone who has way better works than you do. So how is it enough? How do we ultimately know if we've got enough works?

The Bible actually tells us that all our good works are like filthy rags before God. Right? Even the good stuff we have to ask God to forgive us of.

[30 : 11] Right? Isn't that crazy? Because we think hey I can get this good stuff. I'm a good dad. I'm a good person. I'm a good moral person. But I'm going to do it on my own. In fact the Bible teaches that you're actually digging a bigger hole for yourself and separating yourself further from God than just by admitting my good works are actually bad works.

And I am not good. And the only thing I can do is plead my case that I do not deserve your grace or mercy. to come before the throne of judgment and I can simply depend on the life of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the resurrection of Jesus.

Because he lived the life that we can't. You get that? He lived a perfect life for us so that we could come to the full knowledge of the Savior and experience salvation.

my prayer for you if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ today is that you would be like the apostles in verse 10 that you would go home and wait for him.

What I mean by that is get on your knees and pray that he would reveal himself. I am here if you want to speak more to it at the end of the service.

[31 : 42] I will be up at the front if you want to be prayed for. Even if you are struggling in your understanding, struggling in your faith, our elders as well will be up here. We would love to pray with you and introduce you to Jesus Christ so that you could get excited on Easter Sunday that he is risen.

Amen. Dear Lord Heavenly Father, said to Father,