

Fear and Great Joy

Matthew 28:1-10

- We arrive at our text of the day after Jesus has been crucified and buried
- Mary Magdalene and the other Mary have come to see the burial place
- They were about to observe the reality of Jesus' words from earlier in His ministry
- As these women would come face to face, first with an angel, then with the risen Christ

- After initial confusion, the disciples would receive total clarity about the situation
- There could be no doubt that Jesus, who was dead, was raised to live again forever
- This was the last of the most important events in the history of the world
- The events that make up the story we call the gospel - or the good news
- And the disciples in our text were there to see it all

- We will read of their experience
- And how they left their first encounter with the risen Savior with "Fear and Great Joy"
- Which is our theme today

- The Bible describes elsewhere the difficulty some disciples were having when Jesus was crucified
- While He declared what would happen just days earlier in Matthew 16 and Matthew 17
- They were struggling to remember or to believe that He was raised from the dead the third day
- Just listen to what He said in Matthew 17:22-23...

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry."

- Readers have a hard time understanding their difficulty
- But the reality of life places pressures upon us that we don't always foresee
- Whatever their forgetfulness or their lack of faith, here they were after His death and burial

- That's where we enter this account
- Let's read all ten verses, then take a closer look...

Matthew 28:1-10

- 1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
- 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
- 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:
- 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.
- 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
- 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

- The resurrection is quite real, these ladies realize
- And the other disciples are about to realize it too

- Let's look at this part of the story a little closer...

Matthew 28:1-2

1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

- There are some important details in this first section
- Namely, that the ladies came to the tomb at dawn on Sunday
- That there was an earthquake
- And that the angel was the one who rolled back the stone sealing the tomb

- Remember, Jesus said He would be crucified and raise again three days later
- And it's important to know the tomb was still sealed through the night
- Because the story would be floated in the next few verses that Jesus was taken in the night
- And that His disciples were responsible

- We know that's not true
- He was risen when the stone was rolled away
- What's more, the council gave the guards money to tell that story
- This was a pathetic attempt at hiding the truth
- Obviously, it didn't work

- More about this angel as we continue...

Matthew 28:3-4

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

- Fear is the first and most natural reaction when men see angels
- The angel's appearance would contribute to this reaction
- These are messengers from God, clearly carrying a reflection of His light with them
- And the guards became as dead men

- If you take the earthquake
- The angel descending from heaven
- And the clear evidence of Jesus having risen
- You begin to see the significance of the events on this morning
- Something big was clearly happening
- And we're about to have verbal affirmation of it...

Matthew 28:5-6

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

- Not only did the angel declare what happened
- He invited the women to come and look
- And He reminded them of Jesus words
- He has done just exactly what He said He would do: raise from the dead
- Whatever doubts or hesitations or failures of faith must have been lifting a little now
- To experience all of this confirmation of Jesus' declaration close-up must have been powerful
- But this was just the beginning
- Because the disciples that arrived at the tomb had more to do and see...

Matthew 28:7

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

- To get a clearer picture, it would be good for you to look up this event in the other gospels
- Matthew's version is fascinating
- These instructions must have brought additional excitement
- Not only were they to tell of His resurrection
- The disciples were to see Him
- Risen, in His glorified state, with their own eyes, in the flesh
- This is glorious news
- And it's news they were eager to deliver...

Matthew 28:8

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

- They made haste
- All they had seen and heard brought an emotional response

- They were fearful, presumably because of what they had seen and what it meant
- But they were exceedingly joyful too

- These were powerful experiences
- But the best was yet to come...

Matthew 28:9-10

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

- The impression made by every other experience on this day would have taken a back seat
- Seeing Jesus in-person, alive, after they knew He was previously dead and buried was a wonder indeed
- Their belief in Him all made sense
- So many things He declared before these events also made sense
- And they could now go on and minister for Him without any doubts

- In fact, their eye-witness accounts and future ministries take away our doubts as well
- Many of His disciples would go on to lose their lives for preaching His death, burial, and resurrection
- But they could do it without any hesitation
- They knew the reality of His death
- And the reality of His life after death

- They would not die for a mere story
- But for the truth

- And those they would inform of His resurrection could go on in confidence too
- Not just because they heard about the resurrection from witnesses
- But because they became witnesses themselves

- He was proven alive by many infallible truths
- This is where they started

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