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Resurrection Encounter

Matthew 28.7-10

Series: Holy Week 2024

The Village Church

March 31, 2024

I. Introduction

A. **Matthew 28:1–10** (ESV) —

1. 1 Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.
2. 2 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.
3. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.
4. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.
5. 5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.
6. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.
7. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”
8. 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.
9. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.
10. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

B. So what do we talk about on Resurrection Sunday?

1. Well, we talk about the resurrection, of course!

C. But there are any number of things we could address in talking about the resurrection

1. We could talk about its evidences
 - a. How the bodily resurrection of Jesus is the most well-attested historical event in human history
 - b. How attempts to discount the historicity of the resurrection fail
 - c. How the theories invented to dismiss the resurrection accounts suffer from errant philosophical and logical assumptions
 - d. Or finally dissolve into absurdity
2. We could also talk about what the resurrection says about who Jesus is
 - a. That, as C.S. Lewis observed, the only options for deciding who Jesus is, come down to His either being Lord, Liar, or Lunatic

- b. How the condescending, patronizing pretensions of unbelievers that Jesus was merely a good man and a remarkable teacher is just so much poppycock
 - c. If He was not crazy – the Lunatic – or was not an abject Liar – then He was who He said He was – the Lord of all
 - 3. We could talk about how the resurrection of Jesus transformed the lives of a small, cowering, rag-tag band of followers, made up of fishermen, tax collectors and women – into a church that has spread through every continent
 - a. And will soon extend to every people, tongue, tribe and nation
 - b. And how nothing but a resurrected Christ could have produced such a global movement
 - c. A movement produced, not by political or military conquest – but produced by the compelling preaching of the gospel that in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself
 - d. Not counting men’s sins against them
 - e. But freeing them from the penalty, power and ultimately, the presence of humankind’s greatest malady – our sinful natures
 - 4. We could talk about all of those things
 - a. In fact, last year we talked about a lot of those things
 - D. But this year I’d like to do something a little different
 - 1. I’d like to talk about how believers actually experience the resurrected Christ

II. **The Women, The Tomb, and the Mystery**

- A. We started with that theme this morning at the Sunrise Service
 - 1. We started with a bunch of women
 - a. Now scholars often point out that Luke is the gospel that features women most prominently
 - b. That certainly is the case
 - c. It’s interesting to me that the Matthew account of the resurrection is nearly entirely focused on the women
 - d. You don’t get anything about the male disciples until the last five verses of the book when Jesus gives the Great Commission
- B. They come to the tomb, at the very crack of dawn, in order to minister to the body of Jesus
 - 1. And everything they experience is beyond their expectations
 - 2. There’s an earthquake
 - a. An angel of the Lord shows up
 - b. Not one of those “unawares” angels, angels that look like human beings but are really spiritual beings in human form
 - c. No! This is an angel that really looks like an angel
 - d. No chance for a misidentification
 - 3. And the angel moves the stone – and is sitting on it
- C. And the only men around are the guards

1. And they're reduced to catatonic zombies out of fear of the angel
- D. And the tomb is empty
 1. The very reason for their coming is now completely unnecessary
 - a. There is no body for them to care for
- E. And if you were at the Sunrise Service you remember that the this dimension of the resurrection was experienced by the women because they came to serve
 1. And even though their task was excruciatingly difficult and somber
 - a. It was through their service that they experience glory
 2. It was through their service that they received the word of the angel that their beloved Jesus was risen from the dead!
 - a. It was through their service that they were able to see the evidence of the resurrection – the empty tomb

III. **Go Quickly!**

- A. Now in this service we continue with the women
 1. Only this time, beginning in verse 7, we see that the women are given a command by the angel
- B. Now you can't just dismiss the command of an angel
 1. Remember – this is not one of those “unawares” angels
 - a. This is an angel that is so magnificent – so blazing white, as to remind them of lightning
 - b. So blazing that the big, tough Roman guards have been reduced to pretzels
- C. So what is their command?
 1. It's simple
 - a. It's **“Go!”**
 2. But it's not just “Go!”
 - a. It's **“Go quickly!”**
 3. “What are you waiting for?”
 - a. Jesus is risen from the dead
 - b. His tomb is empty
 - c. You've got nothing to do here
 4. “What are you going to do?”
 - a. “Sit down together and have a Bible study?”
 - b. “Get your small group together and process your experience?”
 - c. “Well, I feel this way about it?” or “I feel that way about it?”
 - d. Or, “I wonder how He did that?”
 5. “No!” “Go!”
 - a. “Quickly!”

IV. **In going...**

- A. Well, what are you going to do when you go?
 1. There are lots of things that you will do in your going
- B. **... tell the good news!**
 1. **Matthew 28:7** (ESV) —

- a. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead...
 2. The first thing you're going to go and do is go and tell
 - a. You've heard of show and tell – that's Kindergarten stuff
 - b. This is "Go and tell"
 3. Who are you going to tell?
 - a. Eventually, you'll tell the world!
 - b. You'll tell everyone you can
 - c. But to start with – let's just tell the disciples
 4. Tell those guys who seemed to scatter like rats on a sinking ship when Jesus was crucified
 - a. Start with them!
 - b. Because you something – God's going to use those guys
 - c. God's going to use those spineless, wimps
 - d. God's going to use them to change the world!
 - e. Because in using them, their weakness will show God's power and God's glory!
 5. And give them the message – the good message, the good news
 - a. That Jesus is risen from the dead!
 6. Now they won't believe you
 - a. They'll look down their nose at you
 - b. They'll regard you like shepherds – unworthy of being trusted to give testimony
 - c. But tell them anyway
 - d. "Trust me – when they finally meet Jesus, then they'll have a different impression of you"
 - e. "I'll take care of those guys"
 - f. Just tell them! Tell them the good news!
 - g. In going, tell them the good news
- C. **... receive the promise!**
1. And then, in going, you'll receive a promise
 2. **Matthew 28:7** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 "Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."
 3. In your going, He promises that you'll see Him
 - a. Now in this occasion, they are to go, and they will literally see the risen Christ in a particular time and place
 - b. They will see Him in Galilee
 4. "Just go, and I'm promising you, you will see Him there"
 - a. And so will the disciples
 5. I really think the promise is not just for them, or for the disciples
 - a. I think He promises us as well
 - b. That if we go – we will see Him
 - c. He'll show up

6. That's evident at the end of the chapter in the Great Commission
 - a. Which is also a command to "Go!"
 - b. "Go make disciples of all nations..."
 - c. "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
7. There it is for us
 - a. In your going
 - b. Receive the promise
 - c. The promise of the presence of Christ
8. But you know, I often think we get it backwards
 - a. We wait until we meet Jesus
 - b. And when we finally meet Jesus, then we'll go
9. But no!
 - a. In your going, He promises to meet you
 - b. Tell the good news!
 - c. Receive the promise!
- D. ... there is fear and great joy!
 1. So how does this affect these dear women?
 2. Well, in a nutshell, it scrambles their hearts
 - a. Their emotions are a seeming bundle of contradictions
 3. Remember what's already been happening
 - a. In a week's time, they've gone from the excitement of the triumphal entry of the their King
 - b. To His arrest, and trial
 - c. And crucifixion – which these women actually witnessed
 4. What heartbreak after experiencing the high of the glorious entry!
 5. And then they've had a couple of days to think about it
 - a. Think about it!
 - b. Probably sulk about it
 - c. They had to be in emotional misery
 - d. A state of abject depression
 6. And yet they managed somehow to pull it together enough to say, "Ok, He was buried in a hurry; we need to put together some embalming material, some spices – and when the Sabbath is over, as hard as it is, we need to do a better job than with the body than Joseph and Nicodemus did"
 - a. "I mean, the men – what do they know about caring for a body?"
 7. And then they encounter the angel
 - a. And see the empty tomb
 - b. And the catatonic soldiers!
 - c. And the angel tells them to "Go!... Go quickly!"
 8. So now, what do we see? What emotions do they experience?
 9. **Matthew 28:8** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb **with fear and great joy**, and ran to tell his disciples.
 10. "Fear and great joy..."
 - a. Wait – how can you have fear and joy at the same time?

- b. Well, if your emotions are as scrambled as theirs are, you certainly can!
11. Fear
 - a. Fear of what?
 - b. Fear that what they're seeing and hearing is an hallucination?
 - c. A figment of their imaginations?
 - d. A fantasy that they think is reality?
 - e. Is it really real?
 - f. Or fear of what might happen
 - g. Fear of what the authorities will do to them when they realize that the body of Jesus is gone
 - h. And they're the only ones around
 - i. Or fear of what the male disciples would think of their preposterous story?
 - j. Or just fear of this spectacular angel? The one who spooked those tough soldiers
 - k. Or maybe all of those things
 12. But, at the same time, joy!
 - a. Joy at the extraordinary turn of events
 - b. Joy, having been in the depths of depression just moments before, only to now have real hope
 - c. Joy at the very thought that Jesus is who He said He is – the Messiah, the King of kings!
 - d. Joy that the salvation Jesus promised would now be, not just possible, but a reality for all who believe
 - e. What extraordinary joy!
 13. But fear and great joy – both at the same time
 14. Dear friends, in the world of the resurrection, don't be afraid of such a swing of emotions
 - a. Don't be surprised at what you might feel!
 15. You should have genuine fear at the momentous event and what it means
 - a. At the same time, there is never a moment more appropriate for "great joy!"
 16. In your going, you will have fear and great joy!
- E. ... have a joyous encounter!
1. Well, then what happens next in their going
 2. What happens next is that they meet Jesus
 - a. They have an encounter with Jesus
 - b. In fact, a joyous encounter
 3. **Matthew 28:9** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" ...
 4. It's as if He jumped out from behind a tree and said "Surprise!"
 - a. Maybe that's why they have fear and great joy

5. You know something – and I don't think it's sacrilegious to say this – I wouldn't put it past Jesus to have jumped out from behind a tree and said, "Surprise!"
 - a. Sometimes I don't think we realize the times Jesus actually had fun
 6. One of the great churchmen of the 20th Century – Elton Trueblood, whom Jean and I had the pleasure of hearing through a wonderful Lenten teaching series while he was still alive – wrote a book on the Humor of Christ
 - a. He showed many of the ways things that Jesus said, that we all take for granted, are actually quite hilarious
 7. But the way our text reads, it really does give that impression
 - a. "Greetings!"
 - b. The word in Greek is **chairō (Gk)**
 - c. Which is related to the chara (joy) or charis (grace)
 - d. Literally means **"Rejoice! Be glad!"**
 8. There is an exuberance in Jesus' greeting of these dear women
 - a. It was no "Hi y'all"
 - b. Or, for those from Pittsburgh, not "Hey yinz"
 9. No – this was Jesus taking their own joy and multiplying it!
 - a. Taking joy to the next level
 10. In their going...
 - a. They have a joyous encounter
 - b. Not just an encounter
 - c. A joyous encounter
 11. Is your encounter with the Lord Jesus on this resurrection day a joyous encounter?
 - a. Too many Christians take themselves too seriously at times
 - b. Like they've been baptized in vinegar
 12. Now I'm for taking Jesus seriously
 - a. And for not taking ourselves very seriously at all
 13. But I think we should respond to Jesus in the way He responds to us
 - a. That we should reflect His affect, His countenance, His disposition – back to Him
 14. So when He says "Greetings! Rejoice, be glad!"
 - a. We ought to rejoice and be glad
- F. **... worship the risen Christ!**
1. But then, they do take Him seriously
 2. **Matthew 28:9** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"
 - b. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.
 3. They worshiped the risen Christ
 4. In the midst of their joy, they never forgot who was who
 - a. This Jesus, who was dead, and now was alive
 - b. He is God incarnate
 - c. King of kings and Lord of lords

5. And He alone is worthy of worship
 6. He was no angel – who, when people were so awed by their appearance, would deign to worship them
 - a. Who had to tell them to stop it
 7. No – Jesus received their worship
 - a. Because in the resurrection, He was who He said He was
 - b. He is Messiah
 8. So in our going, let us too worship the risen Christ
- G. **.. boldly proclaim the promise!**
1. And then, finally, what does the text tell us?
 2. Well, Jesus Himself gives a command
 - a. Essentially the same command as the angel
 3. **Matthew 28:10** (ESV) —
 - a. 10 Then Jesus said to them,
 - b. “Do not be afraid;
 - c. go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”
 4. They are told to go boldly proclaim the promise
 - a. Proclaim the promise – that they disciples will meet Jesus in Galilee
 5. But to do it without fear
 - a. In other words, to do it boldly
 6. Don’t be afraid of the authorities
 - a. Don’t be afraid of the disciples and what they might think
 - b. Don’t be afraid of your friends who will think you’re crazy, that you’ve lost your marbles
 7. Go!
 - a. Be bold!
 - b. Hold nothing back!

V. Conclusion

- A. So what does the resurrection mean to us?
 1. That’s not an academic question
 - a. Not an intellectual inquiry
 - b. Not a philosophical issue
 2. What does it mean – meaning, how does it affect us
 - a. What response should we make to a resurrected Christ
- B. If Christ was not raised, then you can philosophize all you want
 1. You can debate and inquire
 - a. You can sit in a room and have discussions
- C. But if Christ is truly raised – and He truly was
 1. Then **“Go!”**
 - a. And go with urgency
 - b. **“Go quickly!”**
- D. But don’t just “Go!”

1. But in your going
2. Tell the good news!
 - a. That in Jesus Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself
3. Receive the promise
 - a. That Christ will meet you as you go
4. Experience the fear and great joy
 - a. Don't be surprised in the emotional roller coaster
5. Have a joyous encounter with Jesus
 - a. Experience the joy Jesus intends every believer to know
6. Worship the risen Christ
 - a. Because He alone is worthy of worship
 - b. He is God incarnate
7. And boldly proclaim the promise
 - a. That the risen Christ will meet the believer
 - b. And that He is sufficient for everything we need for salvation and sanctification
 - c. For life and godliness