

Matthew 28:1-10. "Jesus is Alive"

Ajax Alliance Church. Resurrection Sunday. Sunday April 9th, 2023.

Matthew 28:1. [28:1] 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] 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] His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. [4] And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. [5] But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. [6] He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. [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] So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. [9] And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. [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." (ESV)

About 2000 years ago **an earthquake** changed the world in the Middle East. **After an illegal trial and execution, Jesus Christ**, God in the flesh, rose back to life. He did it as was **foretold** by Old Covenant prophets, as **He Himself** said and as **evidenced** by physical and eyewitnesses.

Recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the central event of God's redemptive history. The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, and everything that we are and have and hope to be is predicated on its reality. There would be **no** Christianity if there were **no** resurrection. Although they reveal the same divine truths in perfect harmony with one another, **each of the gospel writers** presents the resurrection from a **distinctive perspective**. **Matthew does not** approach the resurrection from a scholarly, historical, analytical, or evidential perspective but **focuses rather on** the emotional reaction of a group of women who loved Jesus deeply. **Their testimony** changed history forever.

A **disbelieving world**, like the guards **at the tomb itself, have every reason to fear** an empty tomb. **It shows the power of God, authenticating the message of Christ. The empty tomb for those who trust in Christ,** is, like it was for the women, both comfort and assurance. It should **comfort** us because God will **graciously minister to us in our fear** and it should provide us **assurance** because we can **look to the future that He will accomplish what He says He will**

Resurrection joy can be experienced as seen through: 1) Compassion (Matthew 28:1), 2) **Terror** (Matthew 28:2-7), 3) **Joy** (Matthew 28:8), 4) **Worship** (Matthew 28:9) **and 5) Hope** (Matthew 28:10)

Resurrection joy can be experienced as seen through:

1) **COMPASSION** (MATTHEW 28:1)

Matthew 28:1. [28:1] 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. (ESV)

As a commemoration of God's resting after creation, **the Sabbath** was to be a day of rest and worship for Israel (**Ex. 20:8–11**). After the crucifixion of Jesus, **the women went home and kept the Sabbath** as the law required, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

When **the women arrived** at **toward the dawn/daybreak** on Sunday, the third day, **Jesus had already risen**. **John states specifically** that when the women came “it was still dark” (**John 20:1**) (Barton, Bruce B.: *Matthew*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996 (Life Application Bible Commentary), S. 570).

The first day of the week also translates an interesting Greek phrase, which literally means, “**day one with reference to the Sabbath.**”

The Jews did not have names for days of the week, such as Monday, Tuesday, and so on, **but simply numbered them in relation to the Sabbath**. **Sabbath** means “seventh,” and, although it was at the end of the week, because **it was the central and holy day, all other days were reckoned by it**—as the first, second, third, and so forth, day after the Sabbath. Jesus **had repeatedly predicted** the third day would be the day of His resurrection (see Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 27:64; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33). In **the Jewish reckoning of time**, a day included any part of a day; thus in relation to **Jesus' foretelling that He would rise on the third day**, **Friday** was the first day, **Saturday** was the second day, and **Sunday** was the third day. Thus, **Saturday night** by our reckoning was actually **Sunday** by their calendar. Accordingly, **the resurrection** actually occurred sometime during the night, for by the time **the women arrived as it began to dawn** He had already risen from the dead. **Unlike** the Jewish leaders, **the women** certainly had **no** expectation that **the disciples** would steal the body (27:62–66). (*KJV Bible Commentary*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994, S. 1961)

- **The resurrection of Christ** is the ultimate day of all time. It is **the supreme event** that enables life eternal. It is therefore proper, **to consider all time and all our lives** in relation to this event.

What we find now is **not** an account of how Jesus rose from the dead but of **how his resurrection was discovered**. At that predawn hour on Sunday morning **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb/came to look at the grave**. **Mark explained** that they had gone **back to the tomb to bring spices and perfumes** to anoint Jesus' body because they had had **no time** to do so before the Sabbath (Mark 16:1). **Anointing a body** was a sign of love, devotion, and respect. **Bringing spices to the tomb** would be like bringing flowers to a grave today. Since they **did not embalm bodies** in Israel, **they would use perfumes** as a normal practice. The women undoubtedly knew that **Joseph and Nicodemus** had already wrapped the body in linen and spices. **The women** probably were going to do a simple external application of the **fragrant spices** (Barton, Bruce B.: *Matthew*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 1996 (Life Application Bible Commentary), S. 570). Although **Salome, the mother of James and John and the wife of Zebedee** (Mark 16:1; cf. Matt. 27:56), and **Joanna** (Luke 24:10) were also there, **Matthew focuses only on the two Marys**. In all these passages **those mentioned by name do not exclude** the presence of others. Only **the most prominent are named** (Lenski, R. C. H.: *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*. Minneapolis, MN. : Augsburg Publishing House, 1961, S. 1149).

The other Mary was the mother of James and Joseph and the wife of Clopas (see Matt. 27:56; John 19:25). **The women obviously thought Jesus would still be in**

the grave and would remain there, or **else they would not have** brought the anointing spices. They had **not come** to see Jesus risen but **went to see the tomb/to look at the grave** where they **expected** His body to still be lying. **They had been among the women** who ministered to Jesus in Galilee and who had stood with Him at the cross (Matt. 27:55–56). Now they came to the garden **hoping that somehow the great stone could be removed** so they could minister to Him one last time (Mark 16:3). But **despite their lack of faith** in Jesus' promises to rise on the third day, **they came** to the tomb **out of deep affection** for their Lord. **Jewish tradition wrongly** held that **the spirit of a dead person left the body four days after death** because by that time **the body had become so disfigured by decay** that the spirit could no longer recognize it. **Perhaps the two Marys and the other women came** to Jesus' grave with the intent of anointing His body one more time **before His spirit departed from it**. **The women did not have** confidence in Jesus' resurrection, but **they had great love and great devotion** for Him. What they lacked in faith they **compensated for in loving compassion**, and what **they lacked in understanding** they **made up for in courageous devotion**. **Matthew** has chosen **not** to mention their intention to anoint Jesus' body (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:56–24:1), **perhaps because the anointing** has already been done in advance (26:12; cf. 27:59–60) but also because **access to the tomb, already barred** by the stone, has in his account **also been precluded by the sealing and the guard** (France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 1099). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.).

- People **come to worship Christ** for different reasons. Even with doubt and confusion, **Christ can show** Himself in His word preached and **the Spirit** can work the heart and mind to **enable faith**.

What then is this day, the first day of the week?

Poem: "The Day of Resurrection"

The day of resurrection? Earth, tell it out abroad; The Passover of gladness, The Passover of God. From death to life eternal, From this world to the sky, Our Christ hath brought us over With hymns of victory. Now let the heavens be joyful, Let earth her song begin; Let the round world keep triumph, And all that is therein. Let all things seen and unseen Their notes in gladness blend, For Christ the Lord hath risen, Our Joy that hath no end. (John of Damascus as found in Galaxie Software: *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press, 2002; 2002)

Resurrection joy can be experienced as seen through:

2) **TERROR** (MATTHEW 28:2-7)

Matthew 28:2-7. [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] His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. [4] And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. [5] But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. [6] He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. [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." (ESV)

We will spend just about all our time on this point

No sooner had **the women reached the tomb** than they found **the stone had been moved aside** by a **great/severe earthquake**. This was **the second supernaturally caused earthquake or aftershock** in connection with Jesus' death and burial, **the first** one having occurred at the moment of His death (**Matt. 27:51**). This **earthquake had**

occurred when **an angel of the Lord descended from heaven**, **causing the earth around the grave to tremble violently**. **The angel had come to open the secured and sealed grave, and when he arrived he rolled away the stone and sat upon it**. Although it had probably taken **several strong men** some time to put the stone in place, **the angel removed it in an instant**. It seems significant that **an earthquake marked both Jesus' death and his resurrection**. These quakes were obviously more than coincidences of nature; **both quakes signaled that great and mighty acts of God were taking place**. It is as though **God the Father was tying the crucifixion and the resurrection of his Son together with a seismic knot**. Since **the women had also been at the cross, they may have made the connection** (Albrecht, G. Jerome ; Albrecht, Michael J.: *Matthew*. Milwaukee, Wis. : Northwestern Pub. House, 1996 (The People's Bible), S. 435).

- **Regardless of the opposition to the plans of God, by ourselves or others, God will accomplish His sovereign will** exactly when He desires.

Please turn to John 20

The angel did not move the stone in order to let Jesus out of the tomb, as many Easter stories and paintings suggest. If **Jesus had the power** to raise Himself from the dead, which He did (John 10:18), He certainly had the relatively minor power required to escape a sealed grave. As He demonstrated during **several postresurrection appearances**, just as He was no longer bound by death, He was **no longer bound by the limitations of the physical world or of time** (see Luke 24:31; John 20:26). In His glorified form He could escape a closed grave just as easily as He could enter a closed room. **Jesus left the tomb** in much the same way he would **enter the locked room** where his **disciples were gathered later on that same evening** (see **John 20:19**). **His glorified resurrection body was no longer bound by time and space. He simply went where he wanted to go. The walls of the tomb could not contain him, just as a clear pane of glass cannot stop the rays of the sun from passing through** (Albrecht, G. Jerome ; Albrecht, Michael J.: *Matthew*. Milwaukee, Wis. : Northwestern Pub. House, 1996 (The People's Bible), S. 435).

In **comparing the gospel accounts**, it becomes clear that **Jesus had already left the tomb when the stone was rolled away**. **The Apostle John** provides important details of this situation that **Matthew does not**.

John 20:1-4. [20:1] 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. [2] So **she ran and went to Simon Peter** and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "**They have taken** the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." [3] So **Peter went out** with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. [4] **Both of them were running together**, but **the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first**. (ESV)

- Obviously **she had missed the angel's announcement** of Jesus' resurrection. **She was so overwrought** at discovering the tomb empty that **she ran frantically to the two most prominent disciples, Peter and John**, to tell them what she thought was terrible news. **It did not occur to her that Jesus might be risen as He had predicted, and she assumed that someone had stolen the body and hidden it**. It is obvious that **Peter and John did not consider the possibility of resurrection either, and they immediately ran to the tomb to find out what they could** (John 20:3-4).

Meanwhile **Matthew 28:3** specifies, that, **the angel** had **manifested himself** to those who were **near the tomb**, and **his appearance was like lightning**. The **lightning** is to **picture the supernatural brilliance**. In a similar way, the angel's glistening **clothing/garment** that was **white as snow** suggests **God's purity and holiness**. **The angel bore** the very glory of the character of God **in order to make clear to the observers** not only that he was a **supernatural messenger** but that he was an **agent of God** and **not Satan**. (Lenski, R. C. H.: *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*. Minneapolis, MN.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961, S. 1151).

Matthew records in **Matthew 28:4** that the **guards** were so **awestruck** that **for fear of him** they **trembled/shook**. **Trembled/Shook** translates a **Greek term** that has the same root as "earthquake" in verse 2, seismos, from which we get the physical science of **Seismology**, the study of quakes. **The soldiers experienced personal earthquakes** of both **mind and body**. But after a brief moment of shaking, they then **became like dead men**, **paralyzed with fear**. The idea seems to be that they not only **became rigid** but **unconscious, completely traumatized** by what they saw. **Quote: Ironically**, as noted by Hagner, "the ones assigned to guard the dead themselves **appear dead** while the **dead one** has been **made alive**." (Hagner, *Matthew*, 2:869. as found in Chouinard, Larry: *Matthew*. Joplin, Mo : College Press, 1997 (The College Press NIV Commentary), S. Mt 28:2)

- The reality of this situation shows the **broader picture** of **how the message of the resurrection still impacts people**. Although **people can both see the power of God working and hear His message**, being **dead in their trespasses and sins**, like the guards, **refuse to** repent and believe.

Women in **Matthew 28:5** were also frightened, but, **unlike** the soldiers, they received **comfort from God's messenger**. Aware of their fright, **the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid."** The angel **speaks only to the women**. **The Angel did not** answer a question but **"explained,"** the **situation** to them because **the women**, too terrified to speak, had **not** asked a question. **The soldiers** had good reason to be afraid. Not only was **the angel's appearance** terrifying in itself but, because **they had been charged with protecting the grave**, **an empty tomb** could spell their death. **The women**, however, had **no** reason to fear, and **the angel's first words** were meant to give them **comfort and assurance**. **"Do not be afraid" was the angelic injunction** to the shepherds on the hillside at His birth, to the **women** at the tomb at His death, and to **us today** (Courson, J. (2003). *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (p. 214). Thomas Nelson).

The disciples had not come expecting to find Jesus raised, but **in His gracious mercy** God overlooked their weak faith and their lack of understanding. Acknowledging their great love, **God responded with great love**. **"I know that you seek/are looking for Jesus who was crucified;"** the angel said to them; in **Matthew 28:6** **"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said."** **Has risen** translates a Greek aorist passive and can also be rendered, **"has been raised."** **Jesus Himself had power** to give up His life and to take it up again (John 10:18). But Scripture makes clear that He also was raised **by the power of the Father** Because of sin, **the entire human race is dead spiritually**. But it is the **same power of God the father** who raises people to life spiritually, in giving them **the ability to believe: 1 Peter 1:3**. [3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (ESV) (cf. Rom. 6:4; Gal. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:3) **The Holy Spirit was also involved: Romans 8:11**. [11] If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,

he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. (ESV). **The angel gently reminded the women** that **Jesus' resurrection should not surprise** them, **because it happened just as He said**. The words function as a **refutation to the earlier charge** that Jesus is a "deceiver" (**Matthew 27:63**), and thus **validate the credibility** of His earlier predictions (cf. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 26:32) (Chouinard, Larry: *Matthew*. Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1997 (The College Press NIV Commentary), S. Mt 28:5).

- **Luke reports** that they then "remembered His words" (**Luke 24:8**).

Next **the angel invited the women to come, see the place where He lay**. At this point **the women went into the tomb** and **observed that it was indeed empty**. **The angel joined them in the tomb** and **reiterated the same basic message**, saying, "**Do not be amazed**; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. **He has risen**; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him" (**Mark 16:6**). Perhaps the message was **repeated** because **the women found it so hard to believe**, despite the fact that they now remembered Jesus' predictions that He would rise on the third day. When **Peter and John entered the tomb** a short while later, they "beheld the **linen wrappings** lying there, and the **face-cloth**, which had been on His head, **not lying** with the linen wrappings, but **rolled up** in a place by itself" (**John 20:6-7**). **The burial clothes** were just as they were when Joseph and Nicodemus laid the body to rest, except for the face-cloth, which was set to one side. **Jesus did not have to be unwrapped** any more than He had to have the stone removed. **At one moment** He was encased in the linen, and the next **He was free, leaving the wrappings** unchanged. **Jesus had passed through the graveclothes** and **left them behind** as evidence that He was alive. They lay there **like an empty cocoon**. There was **no sign** of struggle, **the graveclothes were not in disarray**. Even **the napkin** (which had been wrapped around His face) was **folded carefully in a place by itself** (Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Mt 28:2). A **grave robber couldn't** possibly have **made off with Jesus' body and left the linens** as if they were still shaped around it (Barton, Bruce B.: *Matthew*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996 (Life Application Bible Commentary), S. 571)

The angel's words here to come, see the place where He lay, is the invitation for all time. We **do not proclaim** an unverifiable mystical experience, but a **historical reality can be examined**. Through the preaching of the gospel, **the Lord invites you to come to him**. He is speaking to you when he says, "Come to me, **all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (**Matt. 11:28-29**). The question that each of us **must ask our ourselves this morning**, like that first resurrection morning, is **have I come to Christ?** There can be **no salvation, no peace or rest until we do** (Boice, James Montgomery: *The Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2001, S. 641)

In **Matthew 28:7** it records that **one of the angels then said**, "**Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead**." The women's fascination must quickly turn to proclamation. **They did not have time** to revel in the marvelous reality of the good news but were to **go immediately and announce it to the cowering disciples**, who were still hiding in Jerusalem. **Yet, it is asked why the disciples were informed through the women**; why angels did **not** appear to them or perhaps Jesus himself. It is amazing to consider **the counter cultural reality of the Kingdom of God**. **Jesus' Jewish contemporaries** held little esteem for the testimony of women (Josephus

Antiquities of the Jews. 4:219; Mishnah. *Yebamot* 15:1, 8–10; 16:7; *Ketubot* 1:6–9; compare Lk 24:11); **this reflects the broader Mediterranean culture’s limited trust of women’s testimony, a mistrust enshrined in Roman law. Women were not even considered reliable enough for court testimony, yet they are esteemed so valuable by God, that He presents them with the first evidence and message of the resurrection. A conspired fabrication of the resurrection of Jesus would not have included such a witness** (Gardner 1986:165; Kee 1980:89) (Keener, Craig S.: *Matthew*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997 (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 1), S. Mt 28:2).

- After being told to **Come & See**, now **we are likewise commanded to Go quickly**. We must **not linger** over this tomb but realize as is **commanded right after this in Matthew 28** in the Great Commission, **this is an event** that we must **leave where we are and go to those who have not seen or understand**.
- **What must we do when we go?** We must **Tell**: We must **tell** them of the reality of Jesus Christ, what he **has done** and what **He promised for** those who would repent of their sin and genuinely embrace Him in worship.

The angel’s further instruction to the women was to tell Jesus’ disciples that **“He is going before you to Galilee, there you will see Him.”** Earlier in the week **Jesus had told the eleven remaining disciples**, “After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee” (**Matt. 26:32**). Being both Jewish and Gentile, **Galilee** represented the world at large. It was there that **Jesus began His ministry**, in “Galilee of the Gentiles,” where “the people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light” (**Matt. 4:15–16**). It would also be in Galilee that the disciples would **receive the Great Commission** from the Lord to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (**Matt. 28:19**). Later, **Jesus appeared to Peter** (Luke 24:34), **to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus** (Luke 24:15; cf. Mark 16:12), **to ten of the disciples** as they were assembled on resurrection evening (John 20:19), **to all eleven disciples** eight days later (John 20:26), and **to seven of the disciples** as they were fishing in the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1). But **Jesus’ supreme appearance to the disciples** was to be in **Galilee**, where He “**appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time**” (**1 Cor. 15:6**) and where He would **commission the eleven to apostolic ministry**. Even if **we are fearful** of **proclaiming the reality of the resurrection**, it is a truth that **the Holy Spirit will use to change hearts and lives**. **All in all, with Coming to the tomb, what should we see: First**, we should see in Christ’s grave **the condescension of Jesus Christ**. We should marvel at the condescension of such **an amazing God**, that he should be placed in a tomb **to save us**. **Second**, we should see **the horror of our sin**, for it was **our sin that put him there** (Isa. 53:5). When we look into the tomb, we begin to **see the horror of our sin** and **develop a proper hatred for it**. **Third**, we should look into the tomb to be **reminded that we too will die**. The tomb speaks of our mortality and **warns us** that **there is a life beyond this life for which we must prepare**. **Fourth**, and most important, we must look into the tomb to **see that Jesus is not in it**. **He is risen as he said**. He has **conquered death**. The empty tomb is **one great evidence** of the resurrection. The **fifth** reason we should look into the tomb is to learn that **we shall also rise, as Jesus did**. When we look at the tomb, we are assured that one day we will be with him and will be as he is (1 John 3:2) (See Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “A Visit to the Tomb,” in *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1971), vol. 18, 637–48.).

Resurrection joy can be experienced as seen through:

3) **Joy** (MATTHEW 28:8)

Matthew 28:8. [8] So they **departed quickly** from the tomb with **fear and great joy**, and **ran to tell his disciples**. (ESV)

Obediently responding to the angel's command, the women departed quickly from the tomb. And although they had the angel's comforting assurance, the women understandably had **a remnant of fear**. But their fear was now tempered by **great joy** at **learning the good news of Jesus' resurrection**. **Mary Magdalene had left the tomb before the angels appeared and on her own initiative reported her findings to Peter and John**, saying, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him" (**John 20:2**). She then **followed those two disciples back** to the tomb, where they, too, found only the linen wrappings. **The other women and the angels had left the garden, and, disappointed and confused, the two men** "went away again to their own homes" (**John 20:5-10**). While **Mary remained outside the tomb weeping, the two angels appeared to her and then the Lord Himself**. It was not until **Jesus called her by name, however, that she recognized Him and shouted, "Rabboni!"** (**John 20:11-16**). **She then reported her wonderful experience to the disciples in Jerusalem** (**John 20: 18**). When **she told the other apostles** about her encounter with the resurrected Christ, they **did not believe her** (Mark 16:11). **Their disbelief** (see also Mark 16:13; Luke 24:10-11) clearly proves that **they had no intention of stealing Jesus' body** in order to propagate a counterfeit resurrection, as **the chief priests and Pharisees feared they would do** (Matt. 27:62-64; 28:13). This is besides **the physical fact** that **the disciples were not physically present** when Jesus rose from the dead. **Proclaiming the reality of the resurrection will often result in disbelief even from those who are close to us. Yet truthful examination will often surprise.** **Quote:** The noted historian and Oxford professor **Thomas Arnold wrote: The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection** may be, and often has been, shown to be satisfactory; **it is good** according to the **common rules** for distinguishing good evidence from bad. **Thousands and tens of thousands** of persons have **gone through it piece by piece** as carefully as every judge summing upon a most important case. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others **but to satisfy myself**. I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of **no one fact in the history of mankind** which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead. (Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand: Christian Apologetics* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965], pp. 425-26)

Resurrection joy can be experienced as seen through:

4) WORSHIP (MATTHEW 28:9)

Matthew 28:9 [9] And behold, **Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"** And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. (ESV)

Meanwhile, **as the other women were on their way to report the angel's message to the disciples, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"** **Greetings** translates *chairete*, a **common greeting** that loosely rendered means something like "hello" or "good morning." It was the ordinary salutation of the marketplace and of travelers who passed each other on the road. In other words the greeting was **casual and ordinary, seemingly too mundane to be appropriate for such a momentous occasion**. Yet **the glorified Christ, who had just finished conquering sin and death, deigned to greet those faithful women with warm, informal tenderness**. **As the writer of Hebrews assures us: Hebrews 4:15** [15] For we do not have a **high priest** who is unable to sympathize

with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (ESV)

Please turn to Philippians 2

Immediately recognizing their Lord, **the women came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him.** To most ancient Mediterranean peoples **the concept of corporeal resurrection** was barely intelligible; **to Jewish people** it was a strictly end-time event. Yet, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was **not wishful thinking**, or some **non-physical hope**, but **a bodily one**. As Christ would later eat with His disciples in the upper room, **His glorified body** is both able to pass through material (entering the locked door: (John 20:19)) yet **be touched and consume food.** **The women knew** with certainty that **He was the risen Messiah**, the divine Son of God, and that **adoration and praise were the only proper responses to His presence.** The Saturday between Jesus' death and resurrection was **the last Sabbath (Col. 2).** Remember, **Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience** and showing that ever **since the first resurrection on Sunday**, "the first day of the week", Christians **now worship the risen savior on Sunday, commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ** (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). (Keener, Craig S.: *Matthew*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997 (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 1), S. Mt 28:4)

They did what every person, unbeliever as well as believer, will do one day. When Christ comes again, as Paul testifies in Philippians 2:

Philippians 2:5-11. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (ESV)

- At last **the full reality of the resurrection** was solidifying in the minds and hearts of **those women.** They had **heard** the angel's proclamation of the resurrection, had **seen** the empty tomb, had **held** the risen Lord, and had even touched His glorified body. They **could now do nothing but adore and worship Him.**

Poem:

Jesus Christ, my sure defense And my Savior, now is living! Knowing this, my confidence Rests upon the hope he's giving, Though the night of death be fraught Still with many an anxious thought. Jesus, my Redeemer, lives; I, too, unto life shall waken. Endless joy my Savior gives; Shall my courage, then, be shaken? Shall I fear, or could the head Rise and leave his members dead? No, too closely am I bound Unto him by hope forever; Faith's strong hand the rock has found, Grasped it, and will leave it never. Even death now cannot part From its Lord the trusting heart. I am flesh and must return Unto dust, whence I am taken; But by faith I now discern That from death I shall awaken With my Savior to abide In his glory, at his side. Glorified, I shall anew With this flesh then be enshrouded; In this body I shall view God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded; In this flesh I then shall see Jesus Christ eternally. (CW 167:1-5) (Albrecht, G. Jerome ; Albrecht, Michael J.: *Matthew*. Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Pub. House, 1996 (The People's Bible), S. 438)

Finally, and only briefly, Resurrection joy can be experienced as seen through:

5) **HOPE** (MATTHEW 28:10)

Matthew 28:10 [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." (ESV)

Jesus repeated the angel's message, saying, "Do not be afraid; go and tell My brothers to go to Galilee." Despite the disciples' lack of faith, their cowardice, and their defection, the Lord graciously spoke of them as His brothers. When they arrived in Galilee, they would see Him again, and there they would experience a great commissioning by the Lord. Although Christ had every right to rebuke the fearful, doubtful disciples, Yet He addressed them as brothers. With this word Jesus presses the disciples to his bosom as being most near and dear to him. It contains all his love for them, at the same time it bestows the highest honor on them. No higher honor can come to a man than to stand beside Jesus as his brother. **Quote:** Luther brings out one side of this spiritual relationship: "If, now, Christ is our brother, I should like to know what we still lack? Brethren in the flesh have common possessions, have together one father, one inheritance otherwise they would not be brethren... All that Jesus has gained on this great day of his resurrection he has not acquired for himself only but also for all his brethren. (Lenski, R. C. H.: *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*. Minneapolis, MN. : Augsburg Publishing House, 1961, S. 1159).

Closing Hymn:

Prayer Room Invitation

Benediction: Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

(Format Note: Outline & some base commentary from MacArthur, John: *Matthew*. Chicago : Moody Press, 1989, S. 304)