

Easter Sunday Sermon Notes 4/9/23  
**“Conquered the Grave”**  
Matthew 28:1-20

**What should we see when we look to Jesus?**

1. Jesus conquered the \_\_\_\_\_ for us.  
Matthew 28:5-10  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-14  
1 Corinthians 15:51-54
2. Jesus saves us from our \_\_\_\_\_.  
1 Corinthians 15:16-17  
Matthew 28:11-15  
John 8:34-36
3. Jesus makes our lives \_\_\_\_\_.  
Matthew 28:16-20  
Ephesians 1:18-21  
2 Corinthians 5:17-20



# Life Group Discussion Questions

2021 Easter Lesson, April 9-16

Matthew 28:1-20

## Read Matthew 28:1-10

1. Who went to Jesus' tomb? (28:1)

Skeptics have questioned the reliability of the women who were the first to report the news about the empty tomb. Before he became a Christian, Lee Strobel, former editor for the Chicago Tribune, investigated the claims the Bible makes about Jesus. He asked William Lane Craig about the women who came to the tomb. Craig answered,

Certainly, these women were friends of Jesus. But when you understand the role of women in first-century Jewish society, what's really extraordinary is that this empty tomb story should feature women as the discoverers of the empty tomb in the first place.

Women were on a very low rung of the social ladder in first-century Palestine. There are old rabbinical sayings that said, "Let the words of the Law be burned rather than delivered to women" and "Blessed is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female." Women's testimony was regarded as so worthless that they weren't even allowed to serve as legal witnesses in a Jewish court of law.

In light of this, it's absolutely remarkable that the chief witnesses to the empty tomb are these women who were friends of Jesus. Any later legendary account would have certainly portrayed male disciples as discovering the tomb—Peter or John, for example. The fact that women are the first witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly explained by the reality that—like it or not—they were the discoverers of the empty tomb! This shows that the gospel writers faithfully recorded what happened, even if it was embarrassing. This bespeaks the historicity of this tradition rather than its legendary status.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 236-237.

2. Where did the angel go, and what did he do? (28:2)
3. What did the angel look like? (28:3)
4. What effect did the angel have on the guards at the tomb of Jesus? (28:4)
5. What amazing news did the angel announce to the women at the tomb? (28:5-6)
6. What evidence did the angel invite the women to examine? (28:6)
7. What command did the angel give the women in verse 7?
8. How did the women feel as they left the tomb? (28:8)

Larry Chouinard observes,

Although both the women and the guards when confronted with the same events involving an earthquake, the removal of the stone, and the appearance of the “angel of the Lord” are both gripped with “fear” (vv. 4-5), the women are addressed directly and told not to be afraid (v. 5), while the soldiers’ “fear” leaves them as “dead men” (v. 4). Instead of being incapacitated like the soldiers, the events, coupled with their divine interpretation, move the women to action. Clearly, the women followers of Jesus function as models of discipleship. Exemplary devotion enables them to be present as witnesses of both the crucifixion and resurrection. Discipleship as defined by the action of these women, consists of both recognizing and worshipping Jesus as the crucified and risen Christ, and being obedient to a commission to bear witness to others (see vv. 7, 10). In fact, it is the commission of Jesus given the women to announce his resurrection to the disciples that precipitates the reassembling of the male disciples so they might be commissioned to a worldwide mission (28:16-20).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Larry Chouinard, *The College Press NIV Commentary: Matthew* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1997), 504.

9. How did the women respond when Jesus met them? (28:9)

10. What did Jesus tell the women in verse 10?

**Read Matthew 28:11-15**

11. While the women were going out to spread the good news, what did the guards from the tomb do? (28:11)

12. What did the chief priests give the soldiers? Why? (28:12-13)

13. How did the religious leaders reassure the guards that they would not get in trouble with the Roman government? (28:14)

14. What happened to the fake news made up by the enemies of Jesus? (28:15)

**Read Matthew 28:16-20**

15. Who appeared to the disciples? Where? (28:16-17)

16. How did the disciples respond when they saw the risen Savior in verse 17?

17. What did Jesus say about Himself in verse 18?

18. What commands did Jesus give us in this passage? (28:19-20)

19. What promise did Jesus give us in verse 20?

20. Why is the resurrection of Jesus such an important event?

21. What blessings have you seen in your life because of the resurrection of Jesus?

22. How might you answer a skeptic who says that Jesus didn't really rise from the dead?

23. In what practical and realistic ways can you become more effective in sharing the good news about Christ?