

Series: **Easter Sunday 2022**

CDOBC

Today's Title: "**Witness #2**"

April 17, 2022 -

Easter Sunday

OBJECTIVE: To help people see the hope and transformation available to us through the resurrection.

Resurrection Appearances:

1. Mary Magdalene - **Sunday morning** - John 20:11-18 (Mark 16:9-11)
2. The women - **Sunday morning** - Mary - (mother of James and Joseph and wife of Clopas - Matt. 27:56; John 19:25); Salome (mother of James and John, wife of Zebedee - Mark 16:1; Matt. 27:56) **Matthew 28:8-10**
3. Road to Emmaus - **Sunday mid-late morning/afternoon?** - 2 disciples - Luke 24:13-35 (Mark 16:12-13)
4. Disciples in upper room - w/out Thomas - **Sunday night** - John 20:19-23; Luke 24:36-49
5. Disciples in upper room - with Thomas - **8 days later** - John 20:24-29 (Mark 16:14)
6. Shore - Sea of Galilee / Breakfast - 7 disciples - **sometime later** - John 21:1-14
7. 500+ people - **various times before His ascension** - 1 Corinthians 15:1-7
8. Saul/Paul - **Road to Damascus** - 1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:1-19

One of the fascinating parts of the resurrection of Jesus are the appearances of the risen Christ in the **Gospels** - and in **Acts** and **1 Corinthians**.

Looking at the appearances is not just a history lesson - not just looking back at the most amazing event in history.

But there is so much insight - and information in the accounts that are so helpful and encouraging for us today.

In 2020, on Easter Sunday, we looked at the 1st appearance - when Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

This morning, I want us to look at the 2nd appearance - when Jesus appeared to the women who were with Mary.

Turn to Matthew 28:1-10 - p. 835

On Friday - after Jesus died on the cross - Joseph of Arimathea - along with Nicodemus - both members of the Sanhedrin and secret disciples of Jesus - requested and were given possession of Jesus' body.

They took the body - and due to the impending Sabbath - they had to hurry. They could not work on this after sundown - when the Sabbath would begin.

Joseph supplied an expensive linen shroud to wrap the body in - and he supplied the tomb.

Nicodemus bought a large quantity of spices and aloes (75 lbs.) - and these men wrapped Jesus' body with the shroud and the spices - laid the corpse of Jesus in the tomb - and rolled a large stone against the entrance.

Mark tells us they did this while “Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses...” watched (Mark 15:47).

A quick look at the 4 Gospel accounts gives us a roster of sorts - a list of the women who were present during the crucifixion - and it is likely these are the ladies who went to the tomb at the crack of dawn on Sunday.

Matthew 27:56

“among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.”

Mark 16:1

“When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him.”

Luke 24:10

“Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles...”

John 19:25

“...but standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”

John 20:1-2

“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... “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and *we* do not know where they have laid Him.”

It gets confusing, but there seems to be a total of 6-8 women who went to the tomb on Sunday morning.

Mary Magdalene

Mary, the mother of Jesus

Mary's sister (unnamed - Jesus' aunt)

Mary, the wife of Clopas (is this the same person as Mary's sister?)

Mary (mother of James and Joseph)

The mother of the sons of Zebedee (James and John)

Salome

Joanna - see also Luke 8:3

“the other women” ?? - Luke 24:10

They were going to the tomb to do a more complete / thorough job of preparing the body of Jesus with spices.

Some may wonder why the women thought this was needed. After all, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped the body in the linen shroud and 75 lbs. of spices.

Why did the women need to go to the tomb and do the same thing?

If you're married - you probably know the answer...

The men didn't do it right...obviously!!

The Jewish people didn't embalm bodies.

After death, they would have a funeral very quickly - and place the body in a tomb.

Before burial, they would wrap the body with a linen cloth - and they would place very aromatic spices against the body and in the layers of the cloth.

They did this to cover-up the strong odor caused by a decomposing body.

They didn't bury their corpses in the ground.

They used burial chambers - or caves - or for the wealthy chambers carved out of stone - and there would be shelves in multiple places to lay 2 or 3 different corpses.

Usually, a family would own a tomb like this - and they would use it for multiple generations.

There would only be 2 or 3 'shelves' on which to place a corpse, but over time, when all that was left on a shelf were the bones, they would take those bones and place them in what is called an ossuary - which was a ceremonial box which would store the bones of the ancestors, and the shelf could be reused for another family member.

In the Gospel accounts, we know that Jesus was buried in the tomb - unused tomb - of Joseph of Arimathea.

The tomb was sealed with a large stone over the entrance.

On Saturday (Matthew 27:62-66), out of concern for Jesus' prediction of His own resurrection - the Jewish religious leaders talked with Pilate and a Roman guard of soldiers was assigned to secure the tomb.

Let's move now to our text today - and we first see:

The resurrection of Jesus announced. vs. 1-6

The women who went to the tomb at first light on Sunday morning weren't expecting a resurrection.

They were expecting a very gruesome job of preparing and anointing a corpse which would have been in the initial stages of decomposing.

Mark 16:1

"When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him."

Notice - they were not expecting an empty tomb - a resurrected Jesus.

Read Matthew 28:1-6

Matthew isn't giving us a complete roster of the women going to the tomb - he just focuses on 2 of the Mary's.

At the crack of dawn - on Sunday, "the first day of the week".

“And behold” - marks an important event.

“earthquake” - God seems to have used earthquakes often when He wanted to do something or announce something.

The last time He used an earthquake was a few days prior - on Friday - at the moment of Jesus’ death...

Matthew 27:50-51

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.”

The morning of the resurrection, the reason for the earthquake is the arrival of the angel.

“...for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven...”

We’re told the angel “...rolled back the stone and sat on it.”

Jesus didn’t need the stone moved so He could come out of the tomb.

It’s pretty bizarre to realize this and think about it, but when Jesus was raised, His resurrected / glorified bodies molecular structure was different.

He was able to pass through objects - like linen shrouds and solid rock - and closed rooms with locked doors.

The angel didn’t move the rock for Jesus to get out.

He moved the rock so the women - and later Peter and John could go in!!!

The angel is sitting on the stone - kind of a mocking statement of the frailty of human power.

The angel's appearance was stunning.

"...like lightning, and his clothing white as snow."

His appearance was likely due to his presence / proximity to God.

We read in Exodus, when Moses came down from the mountain after meeting with God - Moses' face was "shining" - due to the glory of God - and the people were afraid to approach him - so he put a veil over his face - to cover / dim the glow of his face after spending time in the presence of God (Exodus 34:29-35).

Here, the angel's appearance tells us that he was in the Father's presence.

Understandably, the guards were freaked out - and they fainted - or were caused to faint.

It's unclear if the women saw the same things the guards saw - or if they arrived after the angel's arrival.

But their initial response is fear.

This is consistent with virtually every instance of an angelic visitation in the Biblical record.

When a spiritual being shows up in the material / physical world - it will freak you out!!

The angel calms their fears: "Do not be afraid".

Not sure that worked so well...but the women didn't faint like the big, brave, battle-tested soldiers!

The angel calms their fears not only by telling them “Do not be afraid”, but he tells them the reason they are there is not a reason for fear - but a reason for joy!

The angel could have rebuked them - chided them for not believing what Jesus had told them.

Multiple times in the final months leading up to the crucifixion, Jesus told His followers that He would die, but He would rise from the dead.

However, His followers - including all the disciples - never really believed that one.

It is kind of a hard one to accept at face value, but this was Jesus.

He had raised others from the dead - He had made the blind see - the deaf hear - the paralyzed walk - those with leprosy were healed - the demon-possessed were rescued and redeemed from their bondage.

Jesus had power over nature - power over demons - power over disease and the physical body.

He created wine out of water - massive amounts of food from one boy's lunch.

They should have believed what Jesus told them.

But the angel doesn't rebuke them.

Instead - the angel announces the resurrection of Jesus!!

vs. 6 - “He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay.”

There is a small rebuke - kind of like: *He told you about this.* - “as He said”.

Do you struggle believing some of the things Jesus said?
Do you have a hard time taking Jesus at His word?

- Is it hard to believe His commands - the raising of the bar in the Sermon on the Mount?
- Is it hard to believe that ‘FAITH’ is what Jesus requires?
- Is it hard to believe that Jesus calls you to follow Him?
- Is it hard to believe that He died for you?
- Is it hard to believe He loves you?
- Hard to believe He will forgive you?

Then the angel invites them into the tomb.

Come check it out!!

“Come, see the place where He lay.”!!!!!!

Matthew doesn’t tell us if they looked inside - I think it’s safe to assume they did.

Wouldn’t you????

The next words we have are:

The angel’s instructions to the women. vs. 7-8

There was an urgency to the angel’s instructions.

Read vs. 7-8

Don't take your time - this is an urgent matter!

Don't try and figure it out.

Just go... “quickly” - and “tell His disciples”.

The women - and the other disciples struggled with believing Jesus would rise from the dead.

Here the issue is obedience.

The angel commissions them - a group of women - to go tell the disciples that Jesus has risen.

Now...this may not seem like a big deal to us in 2022.

But in the 1st century - in Jewish society - women were not trusted for their testimony.

I think it's amazing that the first witnesses to the resurrected Jesus' were women.

Not only were they the first witnesses, but they were charged - given the responsibility to go and tell His disciples!

The disciples who failed to believe Jesus - are going to hear this news from the women who were blessed and honored by God to see Jesus first!

2 things about this...

1) This adds tremendous credibility to the reliability of the Gospel accounts.

Given the standing of women in 1st century culture, the fact that it's the women who were the first eyewitnesses

of the resurrected Jesus proves this is how it actually happened.

If someone was making this up - they would never have chosen women as the eyewitnesses.

2) This is a statement by God of His view of women.

He has a high view of women.

Women are not inferior to men.

In God's eyes - as Paul would later write in **Galatians 3** - there is no difference in value between men and women.

Women are created in the image of God - just like men also carry the image of God.

Women are used by God in vital and important ways.

Are there differences between men and women?

Absolutely!!!

I'm pretty sure everyone in this room can tell you what a man is...and what a woman is.

And we are very different.

But we are also the same in many ways.

God's plan of having women as the first eyewitnesses was not on accident - it wasn't 'chance' - it was planned and purposeful.

One final thing before we move to the last 2 verses.

I love that Matthew tells us in **vs. 8**.

"...they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples."

Have you ever had conflicting emotions?

“...with fear and great joy”

- I did when I was asking Kim’s parents for their permission to marry their daughter.
- When our kids were born - fear and joy.
- I sometime have this in worship.

My sinfulness causes me to be in fear - a reverential fear of a holy God.

At the same time, I have great joy - because I know that God is also gracious, merciful, kind, compassionate, and loving!

Let’s move on...

Jesus appears to the women. vs. 9-10

As they are going “quickly” - Jesus meets them!!!

Read vs. 9-10

There are several things here...

#1

Jesus is so casual - “Greetings”

Every day, normal greeting.

‘Hi’ / ‘Hola’ / ‘Hallo’ / ‘Salut’ / ‘Ciao’ /

#2

Now...didn’t the angle just tell them:

“...go quickly and tell His disciples”

Now Jesus is slowing them down!!!

Have you ever been too busy doing ministry to stop and notice Jesus?

Have you ever been too busy doing things for God to worship God?

I love that the women stop - fall on their knees - embrace the feet of Jesus - and worship Him.

#3

Have you met the resurrected Jesus?

When you met Him - what did you do?

If we read **vs. 11-15**, we see the story the authorities made up to explain the empty tomb.

We read the ridiculous story about the soldiers falling asleep while on duty.

First, if a soldier fell asleep on duty it was a possible death sentence.

Second, if the soldiers were asleep - didn't all the commotion of moving the stone and carrying away the body wake one of them up?

Third, if you were stealing a body - and you were in a hurry as the soldiers were sleeping - why would you take the time to unwarp the linen shroud from the body?

Fourth, if the soldiers were asleep - how did they know it was the disciples who took the body?

Have you made up some excuses for not stopping and worshipping Jesus?

What is the story you tell people about why you aren't a Christian?

What is the reason you don't believe in the resurrection? Your reasons - your story may satisfy other people... Do you really think it will satisfy God?

#4

Jesus knows they have mixed feelings - fear and joy - and He tells them "Do not be afraid".

He's still caring for them - still helping them - still loving them.

He allows them this time of worship.

I'm sure there were things said that Matthew doesn't record here.

After these moments, Jesus sends them on the mission the angel had told them to do.

Apply it...

Do you believe in the resurrected Jesus - *or some story?*

Put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.

Acts 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved..."

Jesus is alive - He is the only way to God. Believe.

Closing prayer