

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 28:1-15 | An Empty Tomb and Risen Jesus
Sunday June 21, 2026

WELCOME:

- There are Bibles in the back. Please take one as our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are available in the foyer. Feel free to take a copy home with you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we explored a passage found only in Matthew's Gospel.

We saw how the religious leaders were so afraid of the resurrection that they went to Pilate asking for soldiers to guard a dead man.

I'm sure Pilate found that hilarious!

They thought that the Disciples might come and steal Jesus' body, trying to pull off some grand deception.

Last Week KEYPOINTS:

- *Stealing a body never proves a resurrection. Only the living, breathing risen Christ Himself is proof of the resurrection.*
- *This ongoing conspiracy of the religious leaders shows us how far unbelief will go to avoid the truth.*
- *God uses their wicked plan to protect the truth they hated.*

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we begin the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel, chapter 28.

We began our journey through Matthew on January 9, 2022.

By God's grace, and after 182 sermons together, here we are—what a journey it has been!

Four years is a long road—some of you have walked through job changes, health scares, new babies, lots of grandbabies, and memorial services.

Now, we stand at the open tomb of the Lord Jesus!

Today, we will look at a longer passage than usual—15 verses.

You probably know today's passage well—it's one of the main Scriptures we use to teach on Resurrection Sunday.

Resurrection Sunday, or Easter, is such a special day for the local church—it's also a day when many visitors show up for the first time.

Generally, on Christmas or Easter, my sermons are much more evangelistic than normal—they're aimed at helping people know who Jesus is for the first time.

But today, I really want us to consider how we, as the church, apply the reality of the resurrection to our personal lives.

In other words, *"How has the resurrection changed you?"*

As we open chapter 28, the first thing that stands out is how brief it is.

The resurrection account is much shorter—just 20 verses—compared to the Passion Narrative and the other discourses in Matthew.

All the Gospel writers keep it brief, reporting the facts of the resurrection.

The meaning, results, and impact of the resurrection are explained throughout the rest of the New Testament—in the Epistles.

The resurrection—Jesus conquering sin and death for us—is not just the pinnacle of the Gospel, but the high point of all human history.

A few thoughts—big picture stuff:

The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, and everything that we are and have and hope to be is grounded in its reality.

Anyone who denies the resurrection cannot truly be called a Christian.

Without the resurrection, there is no Christianity.

Without the resurrection, there is no Christian faith, no salvation (heaven), and no hope for any of us.

1 Corinthians 15:13— *If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised;*

1 Corinthians 15:14— *and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith*

1 Corinthians 15:16—*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.*

1 Corinthians 15:17—*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.*

Spoiler alert—Christ has been raised, the apostle’s proclamation is not in vain!

So, if you believe, your faith is not useless, and you are not still in your sins.

You are forgiven and free! It is for freedom that Christ set us free!

Jesus is alive—He was raised from the dead!

Today’s passage tells us about that glorious resurrection morning.

Let's learn from it and see how it applies to you today.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 28:1—After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb.

Matthew 28:2—There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it.

Matthew 28:3—His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.

Matthew 28:4—The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.

Matthew 28:5—The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

Matthew 28:6—He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Matthew 28:7—Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.' Listen, I have told you."

Matthew 28:8—So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news.

Matthew 28:9—Just then Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.

Matthew 28:10—Then Jesus told them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.”

Matthew 28:11—As they were on their way, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.

Matthew 28:12—After the priests had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money

Matthew 28:13—and told them, “Say this, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him while we were sleeping.’”

Matthew 28:14—If this reaches the governor’s ears, we will deal with him and keep you out of trouble.”

Matthew 28:15—They took the money and did as they were instructed, and this story has been spread among Jewish people to this day.

PRAY:

*For you will not abandon me to Sheol;
you will not allow your faithful one to see decay.*

*You reveal the path of life to me;
in your presence is abundant joy;
at your right hand are eternal pleasures. (Psalm 16:10/11)*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 28:1—After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning,

The Sabbath (a complete day of rest) was on Saturday—so the first day of the week is Sunday.

Jesus' resurrection sanctifies the first day of the week—Sunday— as the new day of worship.

Early Christians referred to it as “the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10).

Next, notice that it was dawn. This is very early on Sunday morning—sunrise.

The birds are starting to chirp, most people are still asleep, and the streets are empty.

Matthew 28:1—*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb.*

Although Salome (Mark 16:1; cf. Matt. 27:56) and Joanna (Luke 24:10) were also there, Matthew focuses only on the two Marys being present.

Mary Magdalene was the woman whom Jesus cast out demons, and the “other Mary” was the mother of James and Joseph.

These are the same women who watched Joseph and Nicodemus bury Jesus in the tomb.

Mary and Mary are not going in faith to celebrate the resurrection, but instead going in grief with spices to anoint Jesus' corpse according to Jewish tradition.

Today, it would be like going to a cemetery with flowers to pay their respects.

What's noteworthy in this opening verse is that, like it or not, the ancient world did not view a woman's testimony as trustworthy.

So ancient writers did not include a testimony from women.

But here in the Gospels, we do—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all include their testimony.

But God honors those whom society does not.

The apostles wrote this story as they did because it's the truth.

God uses unlikely witnesses to reveal His truth

If you had lived in the first century and wanted to make up the story, you would have chosen well-respected and powerful men.

But this story is not made up. This is not fiction—it's a historical narrative.

Mark's Gospel records that, as the women approached the tomb, they asked who would roll back the stone.

What they didn't know was that God the Father installed an automatic garage door opener.

Matthew 28:2—*There was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb.*

There was an earthquake when Jesus died.

The earth quaked, and rocks split when He released His spirit—and now we witness another earthquake at the resurrection.

Coincidence? I think not!

In the OT, an earthquake struck Mount Sinai just before God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses (Ex. 19:18).

There was an earthquake on Mount Horeb when God revealed Himself to Elijah (1 Kings 19:11).

Looking to the End Times, there will be numerous earthquakes (Joel 2:10; Matt. 24:7; Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:13–19).

Why all these earthquakes?

Because earthquakes display God's overwhelming divine presence and power.

Earthquakes are one way God says, "Pay attention! I'm doing something that changes everything!"

Matthew 28:2—*He (the angel) rolled back the stone and was sitting on it.*

The idea here is that the angel flung the stone away from the tomb.

The heavy slab of rock was now lying flat on the ground.

I like the detail... "***Sitting on it.***"

He didn't break a sweat moving the stone.

Can't you picture an angel just sitting, twiddling his thumbs, waiting for the women to arrive to give them the best news mankind has ever heard?

It is interesting that Matthew and Mark speak of only one angel, while Luke and John speak of two.

Skeptics will point out this apparent contradiction to you as you witness to them.

However, keep in mind that if there were two angels, there had to be one—there is no contradiction—only a difference of perspective.

It's like looking at a beautiful painting: You focus on the sunset, and your friend focuses on the ocean—same painting with different perspectives.

Or listening to a song: You focus on the words, your friend focuses on the rhythm—same song, different perspectives.

Each Gospel writer tells the story a little differently from a different perspective.

Matthew 28:3—*His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.*

Why do angels look like lightning?

Because they stand in the presence of Almighty God.

The angel's appearance represents God's purity and holiness.

Matthew 28:4—*The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.*

First things first, notice that these men are not asleep.

Second, these guards are battle-hardened soldiers on duty, prepared for anything.

Think of our elite special forces today—these men are not easily frightened.

Yet, although they were prepared for most things, at this moment, they are not prepared for this an angel—the sight of the supernatural causes terror—they are undone and collapse.

The irony here is that these soldiers were supposed to be guarding a dead man—but now they're the ones who act like dead men.

The idea is that these soldiers became traumatized and paralyzed by fear.

Notice here that the angel doesn't give the guards CPR—he completely ignores them and speaks directly to both Marys.

Matthew 28:5—*The angel told the women, “Don’t be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.*

When an angel shows up in Scripture, what’s the first words out of his mouth?

“Fear not” or “Do not be afraid.”

BTW, if the angel doesn’t say that, you’re in big trouble because he’s not there to comfort you—God’s wrath is on its way.

Matthew 28:6—*He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said.*

This is the greatest angelic statement the world could ever hear!

If you have ever waited for life or death news—maybe a call from a doctor, a text from your child who was in a car accident, a verdict in court—you know how one sentence can change everything.

HE’S NOT HERE! HE’S RISEN!

This sentence has changed eternity for everyone who believes.

Matthew 28:6—*just as he said.*

The angel reminds them of Jesus’s prophecies about His resurrection.

Jesus predicted his death and resurrection three times in Matthew!

And now the angel invites the women into the tomb to see for themselves.

Matthew 28:6—*Come and see the place where he lay.*

The Christian faith is not a blind faith—the angel invites the women to investigate the truth.

The angel invited them to look at the very spot where they knew His corpse lay.

KEYPOINT 1:

The tomb was opened not for the Lord to exit, but for the women to enter.

It's not like Jesus was trapped.

They watched Joseph of Arimathea place Jesus' corpse in there.

They knew exactly where it was laid.

The empty tomb is strong evidence for the resurrection.

However, our faith is not solely based on an empty tomb.

There could be a dozen reasons why the tomb was empty, most of them having nothing to do with a resurrection or anything supernatural.

Our faith is based on:

1. The multiple appearances of Jesus after the third day.
2. On the testimony of hundreds of people who saw Jesus after the Resurrection.

After the examination was done...the angel says:

Matthew 28:7—*Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.' Listen, I have told you."*

After the women see the empty tomb, the angel moves on to their new mission—they are to tell the Disciples two things.

1. Jesus has risen.
2. Jesus will meet you in Galilee.

Matthew 28:8—*So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy,*

If you're a parent, I'm guessing you understand the mixture of fear and joy.

As the doctor hands you your newborn, you're filled with joy, and at the same time, fear overwhelms you because you're not prepared to be a parent.

I know of a pastor friend who, when he was handed his first child, wept uncontrollably—so much so that he thought he would drop his child!

Fear and joy together make for such a powerful mix of emotions.

The women probably didn't know whether to cry or laugh—I imagine they did both!

Should they tremble, or should they leap for joy? They did both!

It was terrifying to see the angel, but thrilling to hear that Jesus was alive.

Matthew 28:8—*they ran to tell his disciples the news.*

What do you do when you hear good news?

Do you keep it to yourself?

You tell people right away. You pick up the phone, send a text, or rush to see someone in person.

That's exactly what these women did—they ran as fast as they could.

As they are running...

Matthew 28:9—*Just then Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"*

I love that Jesus' first words are not "Tah dah!" or "Told you so!"

Instead, He simply says, "Good morning"—so warm, so human, so full of joy.

Can't you picture Jesus saying "Good morning" with a warm, tender smile?

How do the two Marys respond?

Matthew 28:9—*They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.*

Jesus is not a ghost—the women are not seeing a vision or hallucinating.

This passage is not a metaphor.

This is the same Jesus, but now with a glorified and transformed body.

They did what every person will do one day.

Philippians 2:10—*every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—*

Philippians 2:11—*and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Here we see both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus.

Matthew 28:9—*They came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him.*

The women took hold of His feet because Jesus is truly human, and they worshiped Him because He is truly God.

Remember, this is the same Jesus they have known and loved from the very beginning.

He didn't just faint on the cross and recover in the tomb.

Jesus didn't unwrap the grave cloths; He passed right through them.

Jesus truly has been raised from the dead.

It's still Jesus, but He has been changed.

His physical body is different now.

Matthew 28:10—*Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid.*

Why does Jesus tell them not to be afraid? Because they are afraid!

They are filled with both unspeakable joy and fear.

Matthew 28:10—*Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."*

This is the proof of the resurrection—eye witness accounts of Jesus.

When we are fearful, we are forgetful—so the Lord reminds the women again to tell the Disciples to leave for Galilee.

But notice what Jesus calls His disciples: "My brothers."

Isn't that amazing?

Even though the Disciples had abandoned Jesus, Jesus still uses the language of family—He calls them "My brothers."

Jesus welcomes the prodigals back home—and aren't you glad He does?

Matthew 28:11—As they were on their way, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.

Two questions:

1. Only some of the guards went to the chief priests—where did the others go? Can you imagine the chaos of that scene?

2. What were the details of the “everything” that happened?

- *You won't believe what happened.*
- *The earth shook.*
- *We saw this blazing, blinding angel.*
- *The stone popped out of the tomb like a cork.*

As they tell this story, they are filled with terrifying fear—there is no joy mixed in.

Here's the amazing thing: by telling the religious leaders exactly what happened—and how it happened—in their fearful state—these soldiers actually become witnesses—evangelists—for the resurrection!

The soldiers were stationed there to prevent a resurrection hoax, but now they are the ones telling the truth about the real resurrection!

KEYPOINT 2:

God uses unlikely witnesses to reveal His truth.

First, it was the women, now it's the soldiers—today it's us!

What the religious leaders feared most has actually come true.

When they hear the news, do they repent?

Matthew 28:12—*After the priests had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan,*

These guys don't agree on anything—republicans and democrats in the same room.

However, they agreed to murder Jesus, and now they agree to cover up His resurrection.

The first thing these men do is not repent, but call a meeting.

Instead of crying out, “Lord, have mercy, we were wrong!”

They call a strategy session—they still think they can manage the resurrection.

So what's their solution to this resurrection problem?

Matthew 28:12— *they gave the soldiers a large sum of money*

Their answer is always the same: pay people off. First Judas, now the soldiers.

That word for money is the same word used for the silver given to Judas.

Here's a micro-lesson for us today, because it's a micro-theme from the religious leaders—Be very careful around pastors, priests, and ministers who are always talking about money.

Stay away from anyone who tries to put a price tag on sin.

Sin is like a spiral—every time you go around, the problem gets deeper and wider.

We see that here: the price for sin doesn't just continue, it keeps escalating.

It went from 30 pieces of silver to “a large sum of money.”

They might have enough money to bribe the soldiers, but they will never have enough to buy the truth.

Grace is never for sale. You can't buy it, no matter how much you have.

Grace can only be received as God's free gift.

And if you want to get out of the spiral of sin—confess it to both God and to the person you sinned against—that's the cross.

The cover-up only makes things worse.

Matthew 28:13—and told them, "Say this, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him while we were sleeping.'"

The religious leaders still think they are in control—telling everybody what to believe and what to do.

They try to put a price on silence.

Ironically, the same guards who were to be an asset now become a liability.

Everyone knows that their story is a lie—and the story itself is pathetic.

Remember, the soldiers rotated shifts every three hours to stay awake.

There's no way all the soldiers could have been asleep at the same time.

And if they were asleep, how could they possibly know who took the body?

The story they invent shows how desperate they have become.

The actions of the authorities would be laughable if they were not so wicked.

But the irony only grows deeper.

The leaders try to cover up the resurrection by spreading the very story they wanted to prevent.

They wanted to stop the disciples from stealing the body—guess what?

Now they are the ones spreading that lie—it's another example of how sin makes us stupid.

Matthew 28:14—*If this reaches the governor's ears, we will deal with him and keep you out of trouble."*

How arrogant for the Jewish leaders to think they can control everyone else—even the Roman governor.

KEYPOINT 3:

The eyewitness account of the resurrection brought fear and confusion to the religious leaders—but it did not bring repentance or faith.

Matthew 28:15—*They took the money and did as they were instructed,*

The soldiers perjure themselves.

Far from being executed, punished, or losing their jobs, these guys got a raise.

It's as if they showed up the next day, driving brand-new convertible chariots.

Matthew 28:15—*and this story has been spread among Jewish people to this day.*

It's been well said that a lie can go around the world while truth is still lacing up her boots.

There's something in human nature that makes it easy to believe lies—especially about spiritual things.

But in God's divine sovereignty, the truth of the resurrection is so powerful that even lies told against it ultimately prove it true.

In God's providence, lies highlight the truth.

No other event in history has been researched more than the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Because here we are 2,000 years later—not talking about convincing their lie was, but how empty the tomb still is—and how alive Jesus is alive today.

APPLICATION:

Because Jesus is alive today, I want to go back to my question from earlier—

“How has the resurrection of Jesus Christ changed you?”

I’d like to invite you to look into the rear-view mirror of your life right now— and consider how much God has changed you since the day you believed.

A grace-saved life is a grace-changed life.

No one can call themselves a Christian and not change.

What kind of changes should we be looking for?

The apostle Paul provides a litmus test for how we should be changing.

Galatians 5:19—*Now the works of the flesh (the world/unbelievers) are obvious: **sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity,***

There is no room in a Christian’s life for sexual perversion.

Will a Christian be tempted? Of course.

Will there always be a struggle in this area? You can count on it—so prepare for it.

Watching provocative TV shows, engaging in pornography—this is what the world does, not Christians.

Christians treat people with honor and dignity—not for their own pleasure.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our view of sex and sexuality.

Paul moves from sexual perversion to spiritual adultery.

Galatians 5:20/21— idolatry, sorcery,

The Verde Valley is a cesspool of this stuff— false religions, witchcraft, or the occult.

Please know, whether we realize it or not, we are bombarded with all of it under the guise of New Age.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that there is only one God revealed in three persons.

Next, Paul moves from the supernatural to the relational.

Galatians 5:20/21— idolatry, sorcery, **hatreds,**

Do you, as a Christian, hate someone?

Have you told yourself that you will NEVER forgive that person?

1 John 2:9—*The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother or sister is in the darkness until now.*

1 John 2:11—*But the one who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn't know where he's going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed that hate into love.

Galatians 5:20/21— hatreds, **strife,**

Is there continual strife in your life? Ongoing bitter conflict/constant contention?

Are you the one who provokes it?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our conflicts with people into compassion for people.

Galatians 5:20/21— *hatreds, strife, jealousy,*

As a Christian, do you long for what other people have?

Are you mad at God because He has blessed others, but not you, in the same way?

As Christians, we have been blessed with every blessing we could ever need.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our jealousy into contentment.

Galatians 5:20/21— *hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger,*

Over the years (decades) of being a Christian, have you learned self-control or do you still have a short fuse?

Do people still need to walk on eggshells around you?

James 1:19/20—*My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, for human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness.*

Proverbs 15:18—*A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but one slow to anger calms strife.*

Proverbs 29:11— *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise person holds it in check.*

Can a Christian act so foolishly? You bet, but not for long.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our default disposition of anger to love.

Galatians 5:20/21— *outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions,*

Selfish ambitions are about personal success without morals.

Are you always looking out for yourself?

Philippians 2:3—*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.*

Philippians 2:4—*Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our selfish ambitions into humility.

Galatians 5:20/21— *selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions,*

Dissidents are individuals who intentionally sow discord within a group.

Factions are groups of people who sow discord.

These are the wolves that get into the church.

These are the tares and goats.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has united the church to see these people for who they are.

Galatians 5:20/21— *dissensions, factions, envy,*

Envy is an inward version of jealousy—it focuses more on your internal angst.

Envy is the spite and resentment you hold inside because of someone else's success or possessions.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our envious desires into gratitude for what God has provided.

Paul now moves from internal sins to external.

Galatians 5:20/21— drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar.

Drunkness and carousing are all about excess—binging.

Anything similar—Paul doesn't list all sins because we're still making sin up as we go.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our sinful disposition to moderation.

Galatians 5:21— *I am warning you (Christians) about these things—as I warned you before—that those who practice such things **will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

Scripture says that if we say we're a Christian, but practice (we enjoy, we refuse to repent from these sins), we're not Christians at all.

In other words, God says—*don't fool yourself.*

Now, we all know that Christians will say some of the most hurtful, awful and hateful things.

Christians will do some of the most ungodly things.

So how do you know if you're a Christian at all?

How do you know if the resurrection of Jesus Christ has indeed changed you?

1. When tempted to sin, you experience a struggle/battle.

The things you used to love in this world are no longer so lovely.

There's a part of you that wants to do what you've always done.

And at the same time, there's a new part of you that's turned off or even disgusted by your old behavior.

So, as a Christian, when you're tempted to sin, you experience a new struggle/battle that you've never felt before.

And it feels weird! That feeling is the Holy Spirit of Almighty God purging you of sin.

He is renewing your mind, reforming your faith, and purifying your heart.

But your not perfect...you're going to sin.

2. When a Christian does sin, he learns how to repent quickly.

It could be God's Word, it could be a Brother or Sister in Christ who points a certain sin or blind spot to you.

It could be the Spirit of God renewing your conscience.

The point is that whenever a Christian learns of his sin, he quickly repents.

A Christian confesses that sin to God—and then picks up the phone to make things right to the person they sinned against.

Why would he do that? That seems like an awkward conversation.

Galatians 5:22/23— *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

These are the moral characteristics that the resurrection of Jesus Christ offers.

Please know that it is impossible for us to pursue them perfectly, but we can do so increasingly.

To bear this type of fruit takes a lifetime of walking with Jesus, obeying the Holy Spirit, and participating in your church.

—

Over the years I've seen Christian husbands say and do things to their Christian wives that are anything but loving.

I've seen Christian wives be so disrespectful to their husbands.

I've witnessed both Christian men and women explode with anger time and time again.

And it just seems like people who call themselves Christians bear more bad fruit than good.

And here's the thing—all of these things happen right here at the church.

If these "Christians" are committing these sins in public, in front of their church family, what are they doing in the privacy of their own home?

Here's the question for this week:

How has the empty tomb and risen Jesus— changed your life?

"How has the resurrection of Jesus Christ changed you?"

If you haven't grabbed my notes that are in the foyer, I want to help you answer that question this week.

POP QUIZ

1. At the beginning of the sermon, what key question is considered?

- A. "How can we defend the resurrection?"
- B. "How can we serve more on Sundays?"
- C. "How has the resurrection changed you?"
- D. "How can we give more generously?"

Answer: C

2. What makes the resurrection so central to Christianity?

- A. It is the longest story in all four Gospels
- B. It guarantees material blessings in this life
- C. It is only a helpful moral example
- D. It is the cornerstone of the Christian faith; without it there is no faith, salvation, or hope

Answer: D

3. Why are women being first to witness the empty tomb significant in the first-century context?

- A. Women were the only ones allowed to visit tombs
- B. A woman's testimony was generally not considered trustworthy
- C. Women were considered more spiritual than men
- D. Women were Roman citizens and men were not

Answer: B

4. What is the purpose of the earthquake at the resurrection?

- A. It was random and unrelated to God's plan
- B. It showed the failure of Roman engineering
- C. It displayed God's overwhelming divine presence and power
- D. It was caused by the disciples rolling the stone away

Answer: C

5. According to Key Point 1, why was the stone rolled away from the tomb?

- A. To let Jesus escape before the guards saw Him
- B. To show the guards they had failed
- C. For the women to enter and see that the tomb was empty
- D. To fulfill a Roman military tradition

Answer: C

6. How do the women respond when they meet the risen Jesus in Matthew 28:9?

- A. They run away in fear and say nothing
- B. They debate whether He is a ghost
- C. They take hold of His feet and worship Him
- D. They ask Him for a political kingdom

Answer: C

7. What familial term does Jesus use for His disciples in Matthew 28:10, even after they had abandoned Him?

- A. Servants
- B. Friends
- C. Followers
- D. My brothers

Answer: D

8. What do the religious leaders do when the guards report “everything that had happened” at the tomb?

- A. They assemble with the elders, form a plan, and bribe the soldiers
- B. They go to the tomb to investigate
- C. They immediately repent and believe
- D. They arrest the soldiers and execute them

Answer: A

9. Which of these best summarizes Key Point 2?

- A. God always uses angels instead of people to spread truth
- B. God uses unlikely witnesses to reveal His truth
- C. Only religious leaders can accurately testify about God
- D. Miracles are more important than witnesses

Answer: B

10. According to the application from Galatians 5, what is one clear piece of evidence that someone is truly a Christian?

- A. They never sin again after conversion
- B. When tempted, they experience a real struggle with sin and learn to repent quickly
- C. They attend church every week without fail
- D. They agree with every sermon they hear

Answer: B

BIG PICTURE THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK

- **Personal Application** · How can I practically apply the resurrection's power to my struggles and sins this week?
- **Assurance** · What if I still struggle with sin—does that mean I am not truly a Christian?
- **Witnessing** · How can I share the truth of the resurrection with skeptical friends or family?
- **Repentance** · What steps should I take if I realize I need to repent or reconcile with someone?
- **Historical Evidence** · Are there more resources or simple explanations for the historical reliability of the resurrection?

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Monday – The Empty Tomb & Faith

1. How has believing that “He is not here, for He has risen” practically changed the way you face fear, discouragement, or suffering today?
2. Is there a certain area in your faith where you’re living as if Jesus were still dead?
3. What is one concrete step you can take today to let the reality of the empty tomb mold and shape your thought life and behavior?

Tuesday – Witnesses & Obedience

1. The women ran “with fear and great joy” to tell the disciples the good news. Who is *one person* you can share Christ with this week? What fear is holding you back?
2. God uses unlikely witnesses to reveal His truth. In what ways do you feel “unlikely,” and how might God want to use that very weakness as a platform for His glory?
3. What is one act of simple obedience (like “go and tell”) that you know God has already made clear—but you’ve delayed? What will you do about it today?

Wednesday – Hard Hearts & Honest Repentance

1. The religious leaders heard the eyewitness report and chose a cover-up instead of repentance. In what area of your life are you tempted to manage your sin rather than confess it?
2. Is there any area where you are making excuses, blaming others, or trying to “spin” the story instead of saying, “Lord, have mercy, I was wrong”?
3. What would genuine repentance look like *today*—toward God and toward the person you sinned against?

Thursday – Works of the Flesh

1. As you read through the list in Galatians 5:19–21, which specific work(s) of the flesh most describe recent patterns in your life? How have they shown up this week?
2. Do you see any sin that you’ve started to tolerate, minimize, or secretly enjoy, telling yourself, “It’s not that bad”? How does Paul’s warning challenge that attitude?
3. What guardrail or change in your habits do you need to put in place today (media, relationships, schedule, environment) to stop feeding that sin?

Friday – Fruit of the Spirit

1. Looking back over the last six months, where do you see even small but real evidence of the fruit of the Spirit growing in you (love, joy, peace, etc.)?
2. Which one fruit feels most lacking right now, and why (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control)?
3. How can you intentionally cooperate with the Spirit today in that one area—through Scripture, prayer, seeking counsel, or a specific act of obedience?

Saturday – Resurrection & Everyday Life

1. When you “look in the rear-view mirror” of your life since you believed in Christ, what are two or three ways the resurrection has truly changed you?
2. How has the resurrection affected the way you relate to those closest to you (spouse, children, friends, church family)? Where is change still needed?
3. As you prepare for Sunday worship, what is one specific way you will come differently tomorrow—more repentant, more thankful, more expectant—because Jesus is alive?

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