

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon October 10, 2021

Luke 24: 1 – 8 “The Empty Tomb, Part 4 – Walking by Faith, Not by Sight”

50 Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. 51 He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. 54 That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. 55 And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' 8 And they remembered His words. 9 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. 11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

I. Introduction

- a. Adam and Eve walked in the Presence of God, seeing the Lord face to face, yet they did not believe His Word. The Presence of the Lord was with them. The Lord walked with them and talked with them. Yet, their faith in His Word failed even though they could see Him. They did not believe His Word even as they heard His voice and saw Him. In unbelief, they ate the fruit, and they were banished from God's Presence, no longer allowed to see Him, talk with Him and walk with Him.
- b. Now, that most precious gift from Heaven, **faith**, comes to us who cannot see the Lord. Being apart from the Lord's Presence, yet **being sure** of His Bodily resurrection and heavenly reign, **being sure** of our inheritance in Him, we saints **saved through faith** stand apart from all creatures, both angels and beasts. We walk by faith, not by sight. We believe God's Word, no matter what we see around us.

1. 1 Peter 1:3-9; “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the **resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God **through faith** for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In

this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the ***genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes***, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 ***whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.***"

2. 2 Cor 5:7 "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are ***absent from the Lord.*** 7 For ***we walk by faith, not by sight.***"

- c. This is the defining feature of every saint, and we will observe faith on display again today as we walk alongside the women at the empty tomb and hear the angel evangelists declare the Gospel, He is risen!
- d. Luke 24: 1 – 8 The Empty Tomb
 1. Part 1 - The First Day Sabbath
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II. Where – To the tomb v1-3

- a. "Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, ***came to the tomb*** bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from ***the tomb.*** 3 ***Then they went in*** and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus."
- b. What we know about this tomb:
 1. It was hewn out of the rock. Lk 23:53
 1. Henry "*In a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, that the prison of the grave might be made strong*"¹
 2. It was Joseph of Arimethea's tomb Mt 27:60
 1. "When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed."

¹ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.

2. Henry “He was laid in a *borrowed* tomb, in Joseph’s burying place; as he had not a house of his own, wherein to *lay his head* while he lived, so he had not a grave of his own, wherein to *lay his body* when he was dead, which was an instance of his poverty; yet in this there might be somewhat of a mystery. The grave is the peculiar heritage of a *sinner*, Job 24:19. There is nothing we can truly call our own but our sins and our graves; he *returneth to his earth*, Psalm 146:4. When we go to the grave, we go to our own place; but our Lord Jesus, who had no sin of his own, had no grave of his own; dying under imputed sin, it was fit that he should be buried in a *borrowed* grave; the Jews designed that he should have *made his grave with the wicked*, should have been buried with the thieves with whom he was crucified, but God over-ruled it, so as that he should make it *with the rich in his death*, Isa. 53:9.”²
3. New tomb: no one had been lain in it before. Lk 23:53; Jn 19:41
 1. Lk 23:53 “Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before.”
 2. Henry “But it was *a sepulchre in which never man before was laid*, for he was buried on such an account as never any one before him was buried, only in order to his rising again the third day by his own power; and he was to triumph over the grave as never any man did.”³
4. The tomb was in a garden. Jn 19:41
 1. Henry “That in a sepulchre in a garden Christ’s body was laid. In the garden of Eden death and the grave first received their power, and now in a garden they are conquered, disarmed, and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and from a garden he would rise, and begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground *as a corn of wheat* (ch. 12:24), and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for *his dew is as the dew of herbs*, Isa. 26:19. He is the *fountain of gardens*, S of S. 4:15.”⁴
5. The tomb was nearby the crucifixion. Jn 19:42
 1. Jn 19:41,42 “Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet

² Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1771). Peabody: Hendrickson.

³ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1909). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁴ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 2049). Peabody: Hendrickson.

- been laid. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby."
2. Henry "Observe here the deference which the Jews paid to the sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover-sabbath they had a solemn day of preparation. This day had been ill kept by the chief priests, who called themselves the church, but was well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. (1.) They would not put off the funeral till the sabbath day, because the sabbath is to be a day of holy rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not well agree. (2.) They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the sabbath. What is to be done the evening before the sabbath should be so contrived that it may neither intrench upon sabbath time, nor indispose us for sabbath work."⁵
 6. The tomb was sealed. Guards were placed. On the Sabbath.
 1. "On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' 64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."
 2. Henry "His enemies did what they could to prevent his resurrection; what they did herein was *the next day that followed the day of the preparation*, v. 62. That was the seventh day of the week, the Jewish *sabbath*, yet not expressly called so, but described by this periphrasis, because it was now shortly to give way to the Christian sabbath, which began the day after. Now, 1. All that day, Christ lay dead in the grave; having for six days laboured and done all his work, on the seventh day he *rested*, and was *refreshed*. 2. On that day, the *chief priests and Pharisees*, when they should have been at their devotions, asking pardon for the sins of the week past, were dealing with Pilate about securing the sepulchre, and so *adding rebellion to their sin*. They that had so often quarrelled with Christ for works of the greatest mercy on

⁵ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 2049). Peabody: Hendrickson.

that day, were themselves busied in a work of the greatest malice.”⁶

- c. So, the lifeless Body of Christ our Lord was lain in a manmade cave-tomb (belonging to another man) that had been hewn out of the rock within a garden very near the hill of Calvary. This tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. The door-stone of the garden-tomb was rolled into place by Joseph. Then, on the Sabbath, the Pharisees and chief priests sealed the tomb and set a guard of soldiers to make sure Christ’s Body wasn’t stolen. Before this new, borrowed, sealed, guarded, manmade-cave garden-tomb, the women arrived around dawn that morning of Firstfruits, that first of many Christian Sabbath days of new life.

III. Why – Bringing the prepared spices v2

- a. “Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb ***bringing the spices*** which they had prepared.”
- b. Henry “The zeal of these good women for Christ did continue. The spices which they had prepared the evening before the sabbath, at a great expense, they did not, upon second thoughts, when they had slept upon it, dispose of otherwise, suggesting, *To what purpose is this waste?* but they brought them to the sepulchre on the morning after the sabbath, early, very early. It is a rule of charity, *Every man, according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give*, 2 Co. 9:7. What is prepared for Christ, let it be used for him. Notice is taken of the names of these women, *Mary Magdalene*, and *Joanna*, and *Mary* the mother of James; grave matronly women, it should seem, they were.”⁷
 - 1. Note they went to see and touch and anoint a dead body, as an act of love toward Christ, not thinking at all He would be resurrected, as an expression mourning and loss. Yet, their misunderstanding led them to that tomb at that moment. How often do we find ourselves led by mistaken thoughts to a moment of great revelation, with prior motives washed away in God’s light?

IV. What they found – the stone rolled away, the empty tomb v2,3

- a. “But they found ***the stone rolled away*** from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and ***did not find the body*** of the Lord Jesus.”
- b. Stone rolled away: As these good women arrive, the day dawning around them, with spices in hand, they are first surprised to find the stone rolled away from the tomb. They had wondered who would roll the stone away for them. (Mk 16:3) Now, they are pleasantly surprised to find their impediment removed.
 - 1. Henry “*They said among themselves*, as they were coming along, and now drew near the sepulchre, *Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? For it was very great*, more than they with

⁶ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1771). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁷ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1910). Peabody: Hendrickson.

their united strength could move. They should have thought of this before they came out, and then discretion would have bid them not go, unless they had those to go with them, who could do it. And there was another difficulty much greater than this, to be got over, which they knew nothing of, to wit, a guard of soldiers set to *keep* the sepulchre; who, had they come before they were frightened away, would have frightened them away. But their gracious love to Christ carried them to the sepulchre; and see how by the time they came thither, both these difficulties were removed, both the *stone* which they *knew of*, and the *guard* which they *knew not of*. They saw that the stone was rolled away, which was the first thing that amazed them. Note, They who are carried by a holy zeal, to seek Christ diligently, will find the difficulties that lie in their way strangely to vanish, and themselves helped over them beyond their expectation.”⁸

- c. Jesus Body not in the tomb: They enter in the tomb, as they had planned, to anoint Christ’s lifeless Body with their prepared spices. But, what!? Surely, they inspected every corner of the room, rubbing their eyes, feeling in the shadows, scrambling intensely to find His Body. Where is His Body?

V. Initial Response – greatly perplexed v4

- a. “And it happened, as they were **greatly perplexed** about this”
 - 1. Greatly perplexed = to be entirely at loss, to be in perplexity
 - 2. Even these women filled with deepest affection, expressing fullest devotion to Christ, with Him along His ministry journey, did not remember His prior Word promising resurrection. Note how in our flesh, even in the most obvious fulfillments, we will not remember God’s Word. These women were still walking by sight, even though God’s Word was already available within their minds.
- b. Henry “Note, Good Christians often perplex themselves about that with which they should comfort and encourage themselves.”⁹

VI. The Two Angels announce the Resurrection – v4-7

- a. “And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' ””
- b. Note God’s mercy and compassion to send messengers to these dear women in the midst of their astonishment and disbelief. Jesus had already spoken to them, but the Lord knows our frame. He speaks again via His angels.

⁸ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1817). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁹ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1910). Peabody: Hendrickson.

1. Do you rejoice that the Lord patiently loves you so much that He continues telling you the Gospel over and over again?
 2. Illustration: mommy, will you hug me, please?
- c. Note the gentle correction of God's Message, as if they really already knew the message. "Why do you seek the living amongst the dead?"
1. Henry "They upbraid the women with the absurdity of the search they were making: *Why seek ye the living among the dead? ...But a reproof is given to those that look for him among the dead,—that look for him among the dead heroes that the Gentiles worshipped, as if he were but like one of them,—that look for him in an image, or a crucifix, the work of men's hands, or among unwritten tradition and the inventions of men; and indeed all they that expect happiness and satisfaction in the creature, or perfection in this imperfect state, may be said to seek the living among the dead.*¹⁰"
- d. The Gospel proclamation: "He is not here, but is risen!"
1. Note the simplicity of the Gospel message. Jesus Christ died and was raised up from the dead!
 1. 1 Cor 2:2 "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."
- e. The proof that what they say is true: The Word of God: "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "
1. Note this closely, brothers and sisters. Those who were first to believe in the resurrection of our Lord were not called to believe based upon seeing Christ's resurrected Body. No, not at all, they were called to believe in His resurrection based upon the Word of Christ! They were being called to walk by faith and not by sight. It is not necessary to see Christ's resurrected Body in order to believe.
 2. Henry "They refer them to his own words: *Remember what he spoke to you, when he was yet in Galilee.* If they had duly believed and observed the prediction of it, they would easily have believed the thing itself when it came to pass; and therefore, that the tidings might not be such a surprise to them and they seemed to be, the angels repeat to them what Christ had often said in their hearing, *The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men*, and though it was done by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet they that did it were not the less *sinful* for doing it. He told them that he *must be crucified*. Surely they could not forget that which they had with so much concern seen fulfilled; and would not this bring to their mind that which always followed, *The third day he shall rise again?* Observe,

¹⁰ Henry, M. (1994). [Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume](#) (p. 1910). Peabody: Hendrickson.

These angels from heaven bring not any *new gospel*, but put them in mind, as the angels of the churches do, of the sayings of Christ, and teach them how to improve and apply them.”¹¹

VII. The faith response – they remember – v8

- a. “And **they remembered His words.**”
- b. Note how these women transitioned from perplexity and disbelief into understanding, joy and obedience. They had forgotten the Word of Christ. This placed them in confusion and fear, but then they remembered the Word of Christ and stepped into light, comprehension, rejoicing and obedience.
- c. Remember: to be mindful of; to be recalled.
 1. Note that we forget what we hear from God. Hence, we must build our lives on remembering His Word, day in and day out. We need to hear the Word of Christ every day because we forget every day.
- d. Henry “The women seemed to acquiesce; they *remembered his words*, when they were thus put in mind of them, and thence concluded that if he was risen it was not more than they had reason to expect; and now they were ashamed of the preparations they had made to embalm on the third day *him* who had often said that he would on the third day rise again. Note, A seasonable remembrance of the words of Christ will help us to a right understanding of his providence.”¹²

VIII. Questions to know, love and obey God

¹¹ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1910). Peabody: Hendrickson.

¹² Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 1910). Peabody: Hendrickson.