

## Mark 15:42-16:1-7

### "He Is Risen!"

\* Today is a great day! You may or may not remember that I made mention to you last week something to the effect of *every day* is a great day for the follower of J.C., not because we always *feel good* or are in *perfect health*. Not because our path is primrose & problem free, or because we are emersed in the creature comforts of this life. **But because God has loved us & has given His Son for us.** Jesus was delivered up & crucified for our transgressions & He was raised to life for our justification (that we might stand justified before God by faith in *Him*) & each & every day you (believer) live your life in the power of the *resurrection!*

Death has been defeated & through faith in J.C. you've received the gift of everlasting *life!* Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*"<sup>1</sup> & I'm just going to tell you, your eternal destiny hinges on your answer to that question. \*

To know J.C. is everything. As Paul the apostle said, "*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law (or comes by what I do), but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith (that hinges upon what He has done); that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*"<sup>2</sup>

So, today, resurrection Sunday, (for the over 2 billion believers all over the world) is more than a day of *commemoration*, it's a day of *celebration!* Because the resurrection of J.C. is the affirmation, the *confirmation* that Jesus is everything He said He is. That He was the spotless Lamb of God, the sacrifice who would shed His blood for the sins of the world. & Not only that He would shed His blood for the sin of the world, but that God the Father would receive & accept His sacrifice as *payment in full* for the sin of the world. The sacrifice of J.C. was sufficient to satisfy the righteous wrath of God against sin & we know that God accepted His sacrifice by way of the resurrection (& we'll talk a little more about that a little bit later).

<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Jn 11:25-26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Php 3:8-11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

\* But just to make sure that we're all clear on exactly how critical, how essential the resurrection of Jesus is, I want to share w/you a brief passage found in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15 whereby Paul the apostle (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) makes it known.

Because perhaps you're the type of person who (though you would agree that anyone rising from the dead is miraculous to say the least) you don't understand all the hoopla, all the hype, all the ruckus that we believers make of this day... I mean, "Yeah, it's a big deal, but why are you making it *such* a big deal?"

Listen to what Paul says, right here in 1 Cor 15 beginning in Vs 14. He says this...

*"And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty."*<sup>3</sup> Listen, if Christ isn't risen, then everything we preach is of zero value, & everything you believe is of zero value. – He carries on in Vs 17, *"And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!"*<sup>4</sup>

Do you understand what Paul is saying here? He's saying that as believers, we don't "hedge our bets". – There's a famous story that circulates about Elvis Presley (I've never verified it, but it serves the point nonetheless). He was often seen wearing a number of religious articles on his person. He would have a cross neckless, a star of David & a chai Hebrew symbol. When asked why, he said, "I don't want to miss heaven on a technicality." You know, if *this* doesn't work, then perhaps *that* will. So, I have this & I have that, I'm just kind of hedging my bets.

Ladies and Gentlemen: that's not how it works! As believers we go "all in" on the resurrection of J.C. There is no alternative, no plan B, no contingency or other possibility. If Christ is not risen, our faith is futile (our faith is worthless) & we're still in our sins! Vs 20, *"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."*<sup>5</sup> \* If through one man's disobedience (namely Adam), death came to all, then through one Man's obedience (namely Jesus) all can be made alive. & This is why it's such a big deal! In Jesus we're no longer dead in sin, but alive to God, & the life that we now live we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us & gave Himself for us.

<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 15:14) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 15:17) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>5</sup> *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Co 15:20-22) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& W/that, let's turn our attention into this little window that Mark gives us into the resurrection of Jesus.

When we arrive at this section of scripture, Jesus has been taken, He's been tried, He's been scourged & crucified & He has died. But His body is still hanging on the cross. (& \* We should recognize; we should realize that Jesus wasn't compelled to lay His life down through a series or chain of events that He couldn't circumvent. There was no sense of duty or necessity. It wasn't something He did begrudgingly. He made a conscientious decision, out of love for you & me, to be made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.) \*

They crucified Him at 9:00 a.m. By noon the land was under a total solar eclipse (darkness filled the land) for about 3 hrs. He began to cry out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" They offered Him a drink of sour wine through a sponge they lifted up to Him (which He refused)... Then He cried out w/a loud voice, "It is finished!" Or "Paid in full!" The veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom & He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." & Having said that, He breathed His last...

#### Vs 42-43

Now, we gotta be honest when we read these Vs & confess that we have some mixed emotions here. On the one hand we commend Joseph. Being a prominent council member (which is another way of saying he was part of the Sanhedrin, that group of men who made up the Jewish supreme court [if you will]), he was a man of clout, he was wealthy, he owned property... he was a dignitary. & Yet here he is, coming forward & asking Pilate for the body of a Man who was just put to death under the auspice or indictment of being a traitor to Rome! He's identifying himself with (as far as Rome is concerned) a condemned criminal. & It would take *courage* to do this! -- & So we read in Vs 43, "& taking courage, he went in to Pilate & asked for the body of Jesus."

But on the other hand we think, "Seems kind of late to step up & step out now..." I mean, where was Joseph's voice when the council was condemning Jesus to death? Or any # of previous occasions when they were planning/plotting His death or demise? It seems to have been silent. We know he didn't *consent* to their plans, but he didn't seem to *contend* w/them either. He just stayed quite for fear of how it might impact him to identify w/Jesus. So he was, what the Bible calls (in the 19<sup>th</sup> Ch of the gospel of Jn) a "secret disciple."

Now, we've spoken of this before, so I won't linger on it now, but I just want to encourage you w/this. \* There's really no such thing as a "closet Christian". It's true, better late than never. & We're grateful that Joseph wasn't ashamed to identify w/Jesus in His death. But my encouragement to you is, why wait till it's "late" to identify w/J.C.? Take courage now! You've been called to a time such as this! To a culture & a climate that makes a mockery of J.C. who seeks to strip Him, degrade & humiliate Him on a regular basis! You don't have to shrink back in the shadows in a semblance of shame over who you are. Take courage & be open about the fact that you're a disciple of J.C. \*

Joseph did that. He "came out". He went public w/the fact that he was a follower of Jesus & we're glad that he did... Why? Because it brought w/it irrefutable proof of one fact. God was going to use Joseph right where he was at & it would be etched in His word for all eternity. (Btw God will use you as well, right where you're at. I'm not where you are, you're not where I am. God will use each of us in ways He couldn't use the other, & God was about to use Joseph... Notice).

Vs 44-45

Joseph comes to Pilate (& as a prominent man he had access to Pilate) & he says, "I'd like your permission to take the body of Jesus of Nazareth down from the cross & give Him a proper burial. I don't want Him to wind up just thrown into the pit, into the dump where most crucified criminals wind up."

& Pilate was sort of taken aback. Not that Joseph would ask for Him, but that He was already dead. The Romans didn't invent crucifixion (that would be the Persians, if I'm not mistaken), what the Romans did was *perfect* crucifixion. They had figured out a way to crucify people where it wasn't uncommon for them to hang torturously (in agony) upon a cross for days & days! Jesus died in a matter of hours!

So Pilate is kind of stunned! He calls the centurion who supervised the whole process to himself & asks him if in fact Jesus is dead & has been dead for some time. & This is irrefutable proof that Jesus was dead. Pilate investigated the matter personally, he had eyewitness testimony from this centurion (who'd seen dozens & dozens of crucifixions). He *knew* death & he *knew* that Jesus was dead... In fact, not only had Jesus been crucified, He'd been pierced in the side w/a spear after He'd died to *ensure* that He was dead.

\* It's almost like God knew that people would try & question the death of Jesus ☺. So Pilate investigates, the eyewitness report comes back, Jesus is dead.

Now, if His *death* was genuine that means His resurrection is genuine as well. He didn't "swoon" (as the theory goes) or just kind of "blackout" on the cross, but after a few days in a nice cool tomb He recovered & walked out. What kind of "individual" comes up w/or actually *believes* that kind of nonsense?

I have an idea (speaking facetiously of course). Let's take Mr./Mrs. "Swoon theory", beat them, scourge them, crucify them, run a spear through their side while they're hanging there. **Then take them down after they're rendered unconscious, wrap them head to toe in a sheet & linen strips (surely not easy to breathe in that), then place them in a mausoleum, seal the door & check back in 3 days & see if they've made it out all peachy, rip roaring & ready to go! ☺ That's nonsense! Jesus was dead, a roman centurion investigated & verified it for Pilate! If the death of Jesus is genuine, then the resurrection of Jesus is genuine as well... \***

**Vs 46-47**

Well, that's pretty much that. Imagine the finality of seeing Jesus being placed in that tomb. There's Joseph & perhaps a servant or two carefully carrying the body of Jesus into the tomb, they lay Him down & walk out. Then they turn & roll a stone against the entry & it was done. The women watching all this... how they must've wept as the stone was rolled in place & the Roman guards took their place around it having placed their seal upon it.

**But they wanted to know exactly where He'd been laid so that they could come back 1<sup>st</sup> thing Sunday morning & finish preparing His body. Being 4:00-5:00 in the afternoon & work having to be done by 6:00 due to the Sabbath being upon them, Joseph had to move quickly & couldn't finish the process of applying all the spices & layers of linens in a proper fashion.**

Btw, you might just make a mental note, none of them *expected* a resurrection. What they expected was to return Sunday morning to appropriately prepare the Lord's body for burial. In fact, when the women told the disciples what had happened, *none* of them believed them. They just weren't expecting it. They knew death when they saw it, & in their minds (even though Jesus had told them otherwise) that was that.

**Vs 1-4**

**Does this sound like the conversation of a group of ladies who expected Jesus to have risen? The men weren't even w/them. The disciples were still tucked away in the city fearful for their own lives.**

But as soon as it was light on Sunday morning, they came to the tomb. But they were too late, did you see it there in Vs 2? “The sun had risen.” ☺ Ok, wrong spelling, but both were true! However, that wasn’t where their heads were. They were worried about the weight of the stone. They were wanting to apply spices to the decomposing body of Jesus. Perhaps they were hoping that the Roman soldiers would help them w/the stone...

But much to their shock, their surprise, their amazement, as they approached the tomb, they lifted their eyes & the stone was already rolled back! & Of course, we can’t let this go w/out mentioning the fact that the stone (which Matt tells us was rolled back by an angel) wasn’t rolled back to let Jesus *out*... Can you imagine? ☺ There’s Jesus in all His glory, having risen victoriously that morning, only to be stuck behind the stone? He’s in there pounding away, “Hey, anyone out there? C’mon, let Me out!” Perish the thought! Jesus didn’t need any help getting out of that tomb! The angel rolled the stone away so that eyewitnesses could get *in*! So that these ladies & the disciples that would follow could see w/their own eyes that Jesus wasn’t there, but that He’d risen from the dead just as He’d said! Look at Vs 5.

### Vs 5-7

How incredible is this scene? They see the stone rolled back, they hurry to the tomb to investigate what’s going on & entering the tomb, they don’t see Jesus, they see a young man in a long white robe & it startles them! (Now we gather from the other gospel accounts that this “young man” was actually an angel appearing in human form.) & Though they may not have placed their finger on it immediately, I’m certain they could sense something supernatural about what was happening.

\* & The angel says to them, “Don’t be afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.” The angel announced to them the resurrection of J.C. & he painted a picture of contrast for them of who Jesus *was* versus who He *is* & it’s important that we see that.

He *was* crucified, that is, He *was* dead. He stood in our place. The wages of sin is death. & Somehow, in some way, Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself & through this holy transaction, paid our debt in full... That’s what was. But let’s not stop there. Let’s move on to what is. He *is* risen. That’s what He *is* right now! It’s not uncommon to see jewelry or paintings or carvings of Jesus (in agony) upon the cross. & Though reminders have their place, that’s who Jesus *was*, that’s not who Jesus *is*. He *is* risen! He *is* at the right hand of the Father, ruling & reigning in glory. - \*

\* & It's important that we understand something here. Jesus wasn't *resuscitated*, He was *resurrected*! & He was resurrected *bodily* from the dead. Question, when these women went into that tomb, when those disciples went into that tomb, was the body of Jesus there? No! It wasn't a "spiritual" resurrection. It was a physical, bodily resurrection! **Not resuscitation. There are several examples in scripture of people who were dead (some for hours, others for days) who were raised again to life. But they weren't resurrected. How do I know? Because they had to die again! Jesus was the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits of the resurrection, He rose in His glorified body, never to taste death again!** \*

\* & The angel wanted to make sure that these ladies (& later the disciples) could see w/their eyes that Jesus wasn't there. He had risen from the dead. & It's not that the testimony of an angel isn't enough, but people don't always believe what you've *heard*. It's much more credible, historical fact is predicated upon what people have *seen*. 1 *eyewitness* is worth more than 20 *earwitnesses*.

When you see the place Jesus had laid, you know that death is defeated. When you see the place Jesus had laid, you know in truth that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom 1:4). The resurrection of Jesus sets the *precedent for & brings assurance of our resurrection* (1 Thess 4:14). The resurrection of Jesus sets Christianity apart from any other world "religion".

& Though Jesus died a sinner's death, the resurrection proves that He was in fact sinless, therefore death couldn't hold Him. The death of Jesus upon the cross was the payment for sin & the resurrection proves that God received that payment in full... When you pay a great price for something, you want a receipt so that anyone who would question or inquire can see proof positive that the full payment was received. The resurrection shows that the Father received the death of J.C. as payment in full for the sins of the world. \*

**Vs 7**

Couple quick mentions here & we'll be done. What's the basic message delivered by the angel to these women? It's the same message to you & me. "Come & see, go & tell." Come & see. Jesus is alive, He was delivered up for your transgressions, He was raised for your justification. Come & see, go & tell!

Jesus wanted to reveal Himself to them (there you will see Him). Ladies & Gentlemen, that's the offer that still goes out today. Jesus extends an invitation to you, He wants to meet w/you, reveal Himself *to* you.

& We should note that invitations of Jesus are filled w/grace. I think we'd agree. Jesus had every right to be done w/His disciples, they'd all fled from Him, they'd all completely failed Him. Yet He extended a gracious invitation to them, to meet w/them & reveal Himself to them again.

& Don't miss this, Jesus always keeps His promises... There you will see Him, "as he said to you." What He says He will do, He will do.

& In **closing** we note this special mention of Peter. –\* Peter had failed Jesus in a greater way than any of the others. But don't miss it, the Lord's grace, His mercy, His restoration would abound toward Peter in a way greater than toward any of the others... **Maybe you're here today (after all, it's Easter) but you feel you've blown it so bad, you've grieved the heart of God so deeply that He's done w/you... Where sin abounds, grace abounds more... Jesus invites you to meet w/Him today. He's waiting to renew you, restore you, return you to that place of fellowship w/Him. Draw near to Him & He will draw near to you...\***

#### **Prayer Points:**

God we're so grateful for the work of the cross & the truth of the resurrection. More than a commemoration, it's a celebration. Death is defeated, forgiveness of sin, everlasting life... gifts of Your grace. We thank You for the abundance of grace that you pour out on us every day.

As long as we're on the subject of grace, it's by grace that we're saved through faith. Trusting in what Christ has done on our behalf. Jesus died for our sins, was buried & rose again the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. He paid the debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay. Believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved.