

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JAN 9TH-10TH, 2021 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

"..FOR HE HAS RISEN, AS HE SAID." (MATTHEW 28:1-7)

If their purpose was to prepare Jesus' body for proper burial, they had no thought of the Resurrection.

- Their only motivation would have been love. The same can be said for Joseph of Arimathea (27:57-61) and Nicodemus (John 19:39). None of them had the hope of His resurrection.

Then there was a great earthquake, for "an angel of the Lord" came down from heaven, rolled away the stone, and sat on it. (v. 2) The angel didn't roll away the stone so that Jesus could exit the tomb. We know from other accounts that Jesus could move through matter.

Likely, the primary reason for him removing the stone was for the women to be able to look inside and "see the place where he lay." (v. 6)

- Secondly, he was probably protecting the women from the Roman guard, who "trembled and became like dead men." (v. 4)
- These women were not expecting a Roman guard of 16 men guarding the tomb. They certainly weren't expecting to see an angel.

It says, "his appearance was like lightning and clothing as white as snow." (v. 3) In the pre-dawn light, along with the earthquake, this would have been overwhelming and terrifying.

- "Do not be afraid..." The situation definitely warranted these words.
- He's not here. He has risen, as He said. (12:40, 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 26:32)

"..GO AND TELL MY BROTHERS." (MATTHEW 28:8-10)

After the angel tells them to go quickly, they act on it literally. "Departed quickly...and ran to tell his disciples." (v. 8) "with fear and great joy" – they had just received the best news in the history of the world, fear and great joy may have been an understatement!

- Imagine the whirlwind their thoughts and emotions must have been!

And then Jesus shows up and says, "Greetings!" (v. 9)

- The Greek word used here is *chairo*, which is considered to be a common greeting of gladness. Jesus shows joy at seeing them and greets them so.
- No doubt they are also joyous, but their response is to grab His feet and worship Him.

Here stands the Risen Messiah. Creator and King of the Universe. We would have worshiped Him as well. Jesus tells them again, "Do not be afraid." (v. 10) This is probably because anytime a human encounters a heavenly being, whether an angel or God, it is a very fearful experience.

- Notice, though, that those who are for God and His plans are the ones told to not be afraid.

MY BROTHERS

Jesus tells them to "go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." (v.10)

- The angel could not relay this part of the message, because Jesus wanted to say this personally. The disciples had abandoned Jesus. Every one of them.

Much like the way Jesus restored Peter in John's Gospel, here Jesus is restoring all the disciples.

- Jesus is telling them- You failed at what you promised. That's ok, because I never asked for that promise. I love you. Follow me to where I am leading.

"AND THIS STORY HAS BEEN SPREAD..." (MATTHEW 28:11-15)

Here the story of the soldiers and the Sanhedrin is picked back up and we are shown where their sin leads them.

- "Some of the guard" go and give a true accounting of the events that took place to the chief priests. (v. 11)
- "And when they had assembled with the elders" – these elders are the tribal/political leaders of Jerusalem. (v. 12)

These political leaders combined with the spiritual leaders make up the Sanhedrin.

- Remember that up to this point these leaders had justified their actions on the conviction that Jesus was not the Messiah. They were blinded by their love of power and prestige.
- Jesus did not look like the Messiah they were expecting.

Now they were faced with unbiased testimony from Gentile soldiers to the resurrection of Jesus.

- Their reaction? They make up a false story and pay the soldiers to spread it. It must have been a lot of money, because this story could get these soldiers killed for dereliction of duty.

With the same source of money they used to bribe Judas to betray Jesus (corban, the Temple treasury, 26:15), they now use to attempt to discredit Jesus' resurrection and the final proof that He is indeed the Messiah. (v. 12)

- They also plan to use their standing with the people to coerce Pilate if he hears and the soldiers get in trouble. (v. 14) The same way they used it to convince Pilate to crucify Jesus.

They could not deny the validity of the soldiers' story. Faced with the truth, they chose a lie.

Apparently, it was a prevalent lie: "And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day." This is probably why Matthew included it, in order to set the record straight for his audience. (v. 15)

"GO THEREFORE..." (MATTHEW 28:16-20)

In John's gospel, Thomas was the doubter; but when Jesus came to Thomas and invited him to see for himself, Thomas believed. (John 20:25-28) We see here in verses 17 and 18 that the doubters weren't near to Jesus prior to worship. Jesus then comes and dispels all doubt.

- The two Marys had fear prior to their meeting with Jesus. (vv. 8-10)

When we are far from Jesus, we tend to operate in fear and doubt.

- When we draw near to Jesus (prayer, reading scripture, community, serving others) our doubts and our fears dissipate.
- Answered prayers, consuming truth, fellowship with other disciples, and being an answer to prayer gives us experiences that solidify our faith.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (v. 18)

- Jesus has conquered sin and death and defeated satan. (Genesis 3:15) God the Father has now given Jesus all authority. Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19:16)

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (v. 19a) This is more than getting someone to say a prayer. "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..." (Genesis 1:28) Just as Yahweh wanted to share his authority with the first humans and act through them, so too Jesus is sharing his authority with the first disciples, and by extension with us.

- All nations: Jesus was not only the Messiah of the people of Israel. He is the Christ for everyone. What is the "therefore" there for? Since Jesus has been given all authority, we are to obey Him in this. We are to go in and because of His authority. If you are a follower of Jesus, this is His will for you.

"...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (v. 19b)

- Baptism is about identity. When we are baptized, we are identifying with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. (Rom. 6:4) We are also identifying with the moment Jesus was baptized: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (3:17)
- This also points to Jesus' divinity and the Trinity: A singular Name, but three Persons. Jesus, as the Son, is listed along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Just as all three members of the Trinity were present at Jesus' baptism, so too we are baptized into the name of all Three.

"...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (v. 20a)

- Discipleship involves instruction. Teaching is a skill but also a spiritual gift or appointment given by the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor. 12) We must remember that Jesus is speaking to a group of disciples here, not individuals. But that doesn't let us off the hook.
- Because teaching is a gift or appointment, any of us can be given this gift. But even if we aren't gifted or skilled in this way, we are still called to apply our gifts and skills to carrying out this Great Commission. We are the body of Christ. All of us have a role to play.
- "To observe" means to obey. Jesus never asks you to do what He hasn't already done.
- What all has Jesus commanded us? Sermon on the Mount (Ch. 5-7) Two greatest commandments. (22:37-40) "Love one another." (John 13:34-36)

"And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (v. 20b)

- Immanuel. (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:23) "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth..." (John 14:16) "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:23)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DISCIPLE?

It means acknowledging the authority of Jesus over your life. Is Jesus on the throne of your heart, or are you? It means being involved in discipleship is your number one priority. Are you being discipled? Are you making disciples? Every pursuit in your walk with Jesus should revolve around disciple-making. It means identifying with Jesus through baptism. Have you been baptized?

How do you identify yourself? It means obeying what Jesus commands. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) This includes the Great Commission. It means trusting in the fact that Jesus is with you always. How has the Holy Spirit gifted you? Are you using your gifts to help make disciples? Here at The Experience, we have Next Steps. Next Steps is an intentional flow through the discipleship process. If you want to know more, go to a Next Class!

WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM DISCIPLESHIP?

Is it fear? Doubt? Jesus loves you and wants you to go where He is leading.

Drawing close to Jesus will make those doubts and fears shrink. The process of discipleship itself is the way to draw close to Jesus. Pray, read scripture, and go to church. Get into community. Do community service. Is it habitual sin? Is Jesus the Messiah you were expecting? Jesus calls us to a higher standard, not a worldly one. Break the cycle of sin by engaging in the process of discipleship. Pray, read scripture, and go to church. Get into community. Do community service. Have you responded to the Gospel? We are all made in the image of God, but somewhere along the way we all fail. Jesus humbled Himself on the Cross to pay the price for our failure and offer forgiveness. You must humble yourself and accept that forgiveness to be reconciled to God.