

Matthew 27:57-28:8

‘As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.” “Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.’

Prayer

- For three years, these men and women had been following Jesus, everywhere He went.
- They had left the comfort and normalcy of their lives behind, and had given themselves fully to the mission of Jesus.
 - They watched Him, as He showed compassion to the lowliest of society.
 - They saw His unconditional love poured out on the marginalized and outcast.
 - And watched as He exercised authority and power in healing life-long diseases; casting out demons; commanding winds and waves to stop, and even bringing dead people back to life.
- They, like all of Israel, had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of their Savior; their Messiah; their King.
- And like all of Israel, they assumed that when the Messiah came, that He would overturn the oppressive tyranny of Rome, who had occupied Israel.

- And so, as they followed Jesus for those three years, they ASSUMED that all of His compassion, and love, and power and authority, was going to lead to some kind of social and political revolution.
- Surely the ministry of Jesus would climax in Him overturning the Roman government, and setting up a NEW political system, in the heart of Israel.
- And then one week before He was crucified, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, which was customary for KINGS do to, when they returned from a battle, victorious.
- Hundreds of people laid down their robes on the ground before Him, and waved palm branches, crying out to Jesus “Hosanna!” It means “Save us now!”
- This is what they hoped for, and even expected.
- And Jesus would save them. But not in the way that they thought.
- Because Jesus didn’t come to deliver us from political or social oppression.
- He came to deliver us from something much more dangerous. He came to deliver us from **sin and eternal death.**
- But He would do it, in the most unexpected way.
- And so, when Jesus came into Jerusalem that week riding on the donkey, instead of heading to the capital. He headed to calvary.
- And there His followers watched as He was mocked and scorned; brutally beaten; and eventually crucified.
- For three years, HOPE had grown in their hearts that Jesus was there to save them.
- Every time He performed a miracle
- Every time He taught them a new life changing lesson
- And then rides into Jerusalem like a Saving King — surely Jesus is here to SAVE US — HOPE was growing in His people!
- But then, as they watched Him be nailed to a tree, that HOPE began to fade.
- And with one final breath, He cried out, “IT IS FINISHED” — a statement that sounds SO VICTORIOUS and conclusive.
- And then He died.
- I can’t imagine what His followers must have thought. What His friends and family felt.
- “It is finished”? What is finished?
- Jesus... the same one who had authority over demons, and incurable diseases. The one who brought dead people back to life... now had himself died.
- And as they watched His lifeless body taken down from the cross, and buried in that tomb, I imagine those words still echoed through their city, and in their hearts: “It is finished”.
- **“What is finished, Jesus?** We just watched you be crucified and die. We’re now looking at the tomb where your lifeless body lays.

- The only thing that seems to be finished is HOPE — the hope that we had that you were here to save us.
- But our hope was in you, Jesus. And now you are gone... so with you, our hope is gone too.
- And as our text tells us, Jesus was laid in the tomb that a man name Joseph owned.
 - Caves carved out of rocky hillsides.
 - Huge boulder — 4'-6' in diameter — and rolled into a ditch that was dug, in front of the tomb.
 - 2,000-4,000 lbs.
- Roman guard was placed in front of the tomb.
- Explain...
- So, on that Friday Jesus died, He was buried, and the tomb was sealed and guarded.
- And for His followers, as you can imagine, that was it.
- They thought He was the King who had come to save His people, but now He was dead and gone, along with their hope.
- **But then Sunday came.**
- And as these women arrived at the tomb of Jesus, not only did they find a whole squad of Roman soldiers paralyzed on the ground, but the 3,000 lbs stone had been rolled away.
 - These women **had hope** that Jesus would overthrow the government.
 - **Hope** that Jesus would continue to miraculously heal people. And they would not have been surprised if He did.
- **But this? The stone rolled away, an angel, and an empty tomb.**
- **Can you imagine the surprising hope that welled up in them, as they walked inside that empty tomb on the first ever Easter Sunday?**
- **Jesus is Our Surprising Hope.**
- Sometimes when we think about the events of the resurrection, we disconnect it from reality.
- expound...
- No... nobody comes back to life. That's not a thing that happens. And that's not a thing that **happened** back then.
- These women were SHOCKED to find the empty tomb.
- I bet it was surprising when Jesus showed up as the Messiah, but **didn't immediately make Himself known.**
 - ... When He didn't work himself **into the government ranks** to overthrow the Roman rule from the inside out (like you would have assumed He would do).

- ... When He didn't try to become a **religious leader in a synagogue** in order to increase His influence and expand platform.
- ... When He had **no home of His own**.
- ... That He didn't do the normal social thing of **getting a really good job and settling down**.
- When He **showed honor to people like prostitutes, drunkards, and tax collectors**.
- **And it was probably surprising when Jesus entered into Jerusalem, not to rule from a throne, but to die on a cross.**
- And you may find it surprising, when I tell you that HOPE may not be found where you have been looking for it.
- Maybe, in your life, you have been hoping for a specific situation to turn out a certain way, and when it does your expectation is that things will finally improve.
- We all have a tendency to think things like "Well, when this finally happens, then I'll be ok.
- I'm just waiting for such and such to come together. Once I get this **job** situation figured out. Once my **health** gets on track. Once my **finances** are in order. Once I **meet the right person**.
- We all have a tendency to put our hope in things like this.
- The problem is, none of those things last.
 - ... dream job, but jobs come and go.
 - ... disease, but another one will eventually show up.
 - ... finances in order, but it will be short lived.
- **There is only one hope that lasts.**
- In the Apostle Luke's account of the resurrection, he includes a little detail that Matthew leaves out.
- The angel said to the women, "**Why do you look for the living among the dead?**" (**Luke 24:5**)
- The angel was saying, "Jesus isn't dead anymore. Why are you looking for a living Jesus among dead people?"
- And there are some of us, here today, who have been looking for the living among the dead.
- You're looking for lasting living hope, but you're looking for it in places where you'll never find it.
- There is only one hope that lasts because there is only ONE hope that is ALIVE.
- **Jesus IS LIVING hope.**
- Every other hope is DEAD, because every other hope CANNOT last.
- The reason that Jesus is LIVING HOPE, is because He Himself IS alive and is ETERNALLY alive, forever.
- Which means that the Hope we find in Jesus is not just for THIS life, but for the one come.
 - Jesus is not the kind of hope that meets our temporary, physical need.
 - Jesus is hope that meets our eternal, spiritual need.

- Which means that not only is **Jesus Our Surprising Hope**, **Jesus is Our Saving Hope.**
- But we don't celebrate the resurrection of Jesus because resurrections are exciting and surprising.
- We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus because of what it MEANS for us.
- And what does it mean? The resurrection means SAVING HOPE for us.
- Because the resurrection means that everything that Jesus said and did is true.
- And if everything that Jesus said and did is true, then WE HAVE HOPE. We have SAVING HOPE.
- On the other hand, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. (1 Corinthians 15:17)
- If Jesus is not raised from the dead, then everything He said and did means nothing, and we have not been saved, and we have no hope.
- Because let's be honest — there have been plenty of inspiring influential religious leaders throughout History. What makes Jesus any different than any of them?
- If Jesus is not risen from the dead, then He's no different than any of those guys, and His words mean NOTHING, and He cannot save us.
- **What makes Jesus different, IS the empty tomb.**
- Every single of those people lies dead, in a tomb.
- I've been to the tomb of Jesus. He's not there.
- He has risen from the dead.
- And if He has risen, then we can believe what He said.
 - And what He was that He the **Savior of the world.**
 - That there was **no other way to God**, except through Him.
 - That when we **put our trust in Him, that our sins are forgiven, our slate is washed clean, our guilt is removed, and we are given everlasting life.**
- Jesus being raised from the dead, means that death is not the end for those who trust in Him!
- And that brings us HOPE.
- When Jesus died on the cross and cried out "IT IS FINISHED!", this is what He was talking about.
- The work was finished. Everything that needed to be done for our sins to be forgiven, was accomplished on the cross.
- Listen: Jesus went to the cross to take away your sin. He died to pay the penalty for your sin so that you could be reconciled to God.
 - When you put your trust in Jesus, your sins are washed away.

- He takes YOUR sin and gives YOU HIS righteousness, so that you can stand blameless and innocent before God, not because of what you have or haven't done, but because of what HE did FOR YOU.
- For the person who has put their trust in Jesus, there is life AFTER death, which means that we have HOPE BEYOND the grave.
- Because Jesus is alive, when we put our trust in Him, WE are made alive, not just NOW, but FOREVER.
- **Jesus is our saving hope.**
- You need to know today that nothing other than Jesus will give you lasting hope. You THINK you need this or that. And maybe you do.
- But what you need more than anything else, is a Savior.
- **Jesus is the Savior.**
- **The question is, will you receive Him today, as YOUR savior?**
- And for those of us who HAVE received Him, we need to know today that not only is:
- Jesus is our Surprising Hope, and our Saving Hope
- **Jesus is Our Sending Hope**
- The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. **Then go quickly and tell his disciples**" (Matthew 28:5-7)
- I love discovering new and exciting things... I wanted everyone to know.
- The hope that we have in Jesus ought to stir in us, the same kind of excitement. But Jesus doesn't just satisfy us temporarily. Jesus satisfies our eternal, spiritual hunger.
- As these women stood at the tomb that day, they were not only experiencing the fact that Jesus was the hope that SAVES, But that He was the hope that SENDS.
- This hope SENDS US
- After He rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples, He said: I have risen from the dead, I have conquered sin, the devil, and death...
- "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, **go and make disciples of all nations**" (Matthew 28:18b-19a)
- Jesus is Saving Hope — He is the ONLY eternal hope for the world.
- There is no other name, by which people must be saved, other than the name of Jesus.
- We have been changed by Jesus. And He has given us eternal HOPE.
- So then, let this Hope SEND us into the world to shout if from the roof tops!
- That Jesus is alive and He saves.