

Nothing going on in the world today can tamp down the celebration that is ours today! Let's look at Mark's account of the victorious resurrection of Christ.

Love for Christ Displayed **Verses 1-3**

Jesus, whom these women dearly loved, died on Friday. The Sabbath being over, they went very early on Sunday to anoint the body of their Lord, in one last act of love, to help take away the smell of death. Don't overlook what a display of love this was. The horrible smell of a decaying body didn't deter them from going. Their love was greater. Having no plan to remove the large stone didn't deter them. (explain large stone). Their love was greater. Identifying themselves with Jesus when the white-hot outrage/opposition to Him was likely still aflame, thus putting themselves in jeopardy too, didn't deter them. Their love was greater. Jesus is worthy of such great love. *How about you? Is your love for Jesus so great that personal comforts, seemingly impossible logistics, or opposition can't deter your extravagant expressions of a lifestyle of love to Him? Has your love for Jesus grown dim? Oh, Christian, look at the great love of your Savior for you. Let your love for Him arise!*

Gospel of Christ Proclaimed **Verses 4-6**

As the women arrived at the tomb, they saw that the stone had already been rolled away. Going in, an angel there in the tomb declared: *You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. They*

had gone to the tomb when the sun had risen and found out that the Son had risen! They got to see with their own two eyes that He had risen from the place where He was laid. We can be assured that Christ is risen from the dead. Though many have tried to explain away the truth of His resurrection, there is no explanation for the empty tomb. No one back then disputed that His tomb was empty. Even the guards at the tomb, who stood to be in great trouble for failing to guard the body, and the chief priests, who stood to lose if the story of a resurrected Jesus got out, didn't dispute that the tomb was empty. They circulated a story that the disciples stole the body (Matt 28). But this was a ridiculous assertion (explain: guards, graveclothes). Jesus was truly risen. The women didn't go to the wrong tomb, they knew where He was laid (Mark 15.47) and the angel's declaration assures us they were at the right tomb. Speaking of the women, if early believers fabricated the resurrection, it would have been silly to assert that women were the first witnesses. Women's testimony wasn't reliable/respected back then. But the gospel writers felt no need to hide the facts as they happened. Mary Magdalene thought someone took His body (John 20), but after she saw Jesus, she said to the disciples: (John 20.18) *I have seen the Lord.*

Jesus appeared to so many after His resurrection, even over 500 people at one time (1 Cor 15). Jesus appeared multiple times to His disciples, and this changed them from being afraid behind locked doors for fear of the Jews, to being bold declarers the gospel of our risen

Savior (as we see them doing in Acts) in the same place (Jerusalem) Jesus died and was buried, where opposition to Him was still alive and where all the Jewish leaders would need to do to undercut the message of a resurrected Savior, squashing this new movement of Christ-followers, is show the body of Jesus. But they couldn't, because He was risen! According to church history, 11/12 disciples were martyred, and not one of them, in trying to save his life, said they made the story of His resurrection up. People have died for a lie, but people won't die for what they know to be a lie if they know they can save their life by telling the truth. But they never denied Jesus was risen. It was a truth worth dying for. Paul himself went from being a Christ-hater and persecutor of the church, well on his way to the top of the Jewish religious totem pole, to become not only a Christian but the great missionary to the Gentiles, going against his Jewish brethren that opposed Jesus, all because He saw the risen Christ. James, Jesus' brother, didn't believe in Jesus (**Mark 7.5**), but Jesus appeared to him after His resurrection (**1 Cor 15.7**), and we see James in the NT as a believer, a leader in the church, who wrote the book of James and according to church history, was martyred for his faith. The resurrection is the only explanation for such a change in these people.

The angel declared to the women: *You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.* Friday was a dark day, literally, as all hopes and dreams of those who followed Jesus seemed to die when

He died. But what was truly happening when He died? Why was there literal darkness for three hours in the middle of the day as Jesus hung on that cross? Because Jesus was receiving the penalty that our sins deserved so we could be forgiven by a holy God. See, we are sinners who fall way short of God's glory and the perfect, holy, righteous standard that He requires from us. We aren't righteous and can't do enough good to outweigh our bad to be acceptable to God. **Choosing a spouse** *God doesn't work like that.* Any amount of sin is unacceptable to God, and we are riddled with it. It's inherent in all of us, and it's not ok. The holy and just nature of God requires that sin be punished. Because of our sin, we justly deserve God's eternal wrath in hell, and Scripture says we will receive that if our sin isn't removed; if we aren't seen by God as perfectly righteous. Wow, hopeless. **Yet into our hopelessness steps Jesus!** We don't have the perfect righteousness that God requires, but Jesus does. Jesus, God in the flesh, never sinned and obviously has no sin for which to be punished. Only He could bear our sin in our place and suffer the penalty for it. So out of great love, God sent Jesus to do so: (1 Peter 2:24) *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.* (Spurgeon) *My sins were the scourges which lacerated those blessed shoulders, and crowned with thorn those bleeding brows: my sins cried "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" and laid the cross upon His*

gracious shoulders. The sin that you take so lightly, that you like to ignore/deny you have, that you like to justify, that you compare to others' sin and think isn't so bad. THAT ugly sin caused the ugly, bloody death of Jesus, the holy Son of God. *Still want to minimize your sin? Still want to be indifferent to it? Still want to continue in it?* That which would take you to an eternal hell was taken by Jesus, and He suffered in your place for it so you wouldn't have to. (1 John 4:9–10) *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* In the death of Jesus, God's great love for sinners was displayed and His justice for sin was satisfied. (Rom 4:24b-25) *Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.* One significance of Jesus' resurrection is that it is God's declaration that Jesus' sacrifice was full payment for our sin and that He accepted Jesus' death as sufficient to remove our sins and justify us before Him. Jesus took our unrighteousness upon Himself, receiving God's wrath that we deserve. And now, He offers to us the free gift of His perfect righteousness, making us acceptable to God; based on His righteousness given, not our worth earned by righteous acts we attempt. (2 Cor 5:21) *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* **Twins** He offers to you this gift

of forgiveness and righteousness freely. To be saved, we receive it, turn from our sins in repentance, and put our faith in Jesus' work alone for our salvation. For those who do this, listen to the hope of (Rom 8:34) *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* Because He is risen and ascended to the throne of God, alive today, He now stands before God as our Advocate, testifying that He was condemned in our place, assuring we will never be.

3 other reasons the resurrection of Jesus is great news:

1 - It proves that we are following the true Lord. (Rom 1:4) *and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.* His resurrection distinguishes Christianity from any other religious thought. It proves He is the Lord, the only Way, Truth, Life. Salvation and eternal life are found only in Him. He is God. *Submit to His Lordship!*

2 - God's power displayed in the resurrection is active in the believer's life to make us alive/new now. (Rom 6:4) *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.* His power is so great that He can change a sinner's stubborn heart to live for Him. We don't have to sin anymore but can live alive to righteousness by the power of God! Wow. *Believer, live new!*

3 – As Jesus was raised in a physical body to eternal glory, the power of God defeated sin/death. Likewise, by God’s power, death will not prevail over believers. We will be raised to eternal life in new, glorified bodies, free from sin/suffering. (1 Cor 6:14) *God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.* (1 Cor 15:52) *For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. Believer, live hopeful in a world of hopelessness.*

Mary Magdalene wept in sadness because the tomb was empty (John 20). What she didn’t understand at the time was that the empty tomb wasn’t a reason to weep, but to rejoice! *The empty tomb brings the fullest hope!*

Hope of Christ Offered Verse 7

Notice that the angel specifically told the women to go tell Peter that Jesus was going ahead of them to Galilee. *And Peter.* After Jesus said they’d all fall away from Him that night He was arrested, Peter said (Matt 26:35) *“Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!”* (Tell his story) Though Peter had blown it big time, Jesus still wanted to see him. He was still one of His disciples. His failure didn’t remove him from the Savior’s love. The Savior wanted to bring backslidden Peter home to Himself. *Do you remember that time in your life that you swore your love for Jesus would never grow cold, that you’d always follow Him faithfully and obediently? Maybe you’ve blown it. If you’re a believer, Jesus wants to assure you that you are His. Come back to Him. Like*

Peter did, weep over your sin. Confess it, repent, and turn to Jesus. You are His, and you will find the arms of a welcoming Father when you return, ready to receive and restore the repentant sinner to His great Kingdom purpose for you. His grace is greater than your sin.

Wrong Way Riegels (Micah 7:18) *Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love.*

If you’re not a believer, you are headed the wrong way towards your eternal destruction. Maybe you feel like your sin is a quantum leap beyond what Peter did and feel like God won’t forgive you. Paul (1 Tim 1:15) *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.* (Richard Sibbes) *There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us. If you confess your sin, turn from it in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of your sin/Lord of your life, He will save you and give you the hope that the resurrection assures us.* (Akin) *Jesus is indeed the risen Lord. You can reject Him, but you cannot ignore Him. What Jesus did in rising from the dead demands a response. How will you respond to the risen Lord and King of the universe? It’s a question that cannot be avoided. Respond*

Believer, we have a victorious, risen Savior who won our salvation to forever hope, saving us from the eternal wrath of God. What news to share! Go share it! Wrath is

coming to unbelievers. (Stuart Sheehan) *If a giant cloud of Covid-19 were headed to your neighborhood, would you tell anyone to get out of the way?* Much worse is coming to unbelievers. May we go tell them of the rescue and hope available from our loving, risen Lord.