

ETERNAL REMEMBRANCE Sunday School- April 24, 2011

Unifying Topic: CHRIST IS RISEN!

Lesson Text

I. The Women At The Tomb (Matthew 28:1-7)

II. The Women Meet The Risen Lord (Matthew 28:8-10)

III. The Guards And The Disciples (Matthew 28:11-17)

The Main Thought: And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. (Matthew 28:9 KJV).

Unifying Principle: We love some people so dearly that we remember them after they die. How does our love for others continue even after their death? When the angel reported that Jesus had risen from the dead, those who heard the news worshipped.

Lesson Aim: To teach students about the miraculous resurrect of Christ from the dead.

Life Aim: To teach students how Christ's resurrection from the dead gives us victory over sin and death, empowering our lives with new hope and meaning as it did for the women at the tomb on Easter.

- 28:1** In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.
- 28:2** And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
- 28:3** His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:
- 28:4** And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.
- 28:5** And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
- 28:6** He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.
- 28:7** And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.
- 28:8** And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.
- 28:9** And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.
- 28:10** Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.
- 28:11** Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
- 28:12** And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
- 28:13** Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.
- 28:14** And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
- 28:15** So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
- 28:16** Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.
- 28:17** And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

HISTORY:

The Jews were ¹prevented by law from carrying out executions; the religious leaders sent Jesus to Pilate (the Romans) who condemned Him to be crucified. ²Matthew's Gospel has several unique contributions. It is Matthew's account that includes an account of the suicide of Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Jesus and handed Him over to the Jewish religious leaders. Matthew 27 begins with Jesus being brought to Pilate by the chief priests and elders of Israel (verses 1-2). Verses 3-10 contain an account of Judas' suicide. Verse 11 is the account of Jesus' trial before Pilate continues. It seems to me that Matthew wants his readers to know that in the midst of our Lord's trials, the one who turned Jesus over to the authorities has already come to regret his treachery. The testimony of Judas is added to that of others, including Pilate: "**Jesus is Innocent!**"

Matthew also records the intervention of Pilate's wife, who had a sleepless night and therefore warned her husband not to be a part of the execution of Jesus, since He was an innocent man. Actually, she did not refer to Jesus merely as innocent, but as righteous (27:19, NAB). Matthew is the one who includes an account of Pilate washing his hands (27:24), a symbolic gesture intended to indicate that he did not approve of the crucifixion of Jesus. This does not release him from his guilt for taking part in the death of Jesus. He gave Jesus over to the Jews to be put to death,

¹ http://executableoutlines.com/matt_sg/matt_sg_27.htm

² <http://bible.org/seriespage/jesus-pilate-part-i-john-1828-38>

and he facilitated their plans by having Roman soldiers conduct the crucifixion. And this Pilate did, knowing that Jesus was innocent. Finally, Matthew records that incredible statement of the Jews: **“Let his blood be on us and on our children!”** (27:25). Crucified along with two thieves, Jesus expired after six hours. His body was buried in Joseph’s tomb, secured by Roman guards.

Chapter 28

Matthew reports five significant events surrounding the resurrection—events that stir interest and challenge action.

- I. The time of the resurrection (V1).
- II. The first witnesses of the resurrection (V1).
- III. The miraculous events of the resurrection (V2-4)
- IV. The message from the angel of the resurrection (V5-10).
- V. The attempt to discredit the resurrection (V11-15).

After the Triumphal Entry, Jesus had a Triumphant Resurrection!

LESSON: Matthew 28:1-7 The Women At The Tomb

I. The Time of the Resurrection (28:1).

28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. In the end of the Sabbath: means the same as *“after”* the Sabbath - that is, after the Sabbath was fully completed or finished. Their regular weekly Sabbath was every Saturday. **As it began to dawn:** By Jewish calculation the day ended at sunset and the new day began at the same time. Thus, Saturday night was actually Sunday by their calendar. Jesus arose after the Sabbath was over, that is, on Sunday **the first day of the week**. There are four facts to note:

1. Matthew said, *“In the end of the Sabbath”* which means late on the Sabbath.
2. Jesus arose before *“dawn”*, before the sun arose on Sunday morning.
3. Jesus arose on *“the first day of the week”*, on Sunday morning; meaning He arose on the third day just as He had said.
4. Jesus arose from the grave after the Sabbath unable to observe the laws governing the great season of the Passover and the Sabbath. He was dead, therefore, the law and its observances had no authority over Him. This is symbolic of the identification believers gain in Christ. God counts the man as having died with Christ, therefore in Christ’s death believers become dead to the law.

II. The First Witnesses of the resurrection (28:1).

The resurrection actually occurred sometime during the night, for the time the women arrived, it began to dawn and He had already risen from the dead. Note several things:

1. The first witnesses were women, not men, not even His disciples. The women took the lead in love and care for the Lord Jesus.
 - **Mary Magdalene** stands out as the most prominent of the women witnessing the resurrection of the Lord. Her love and devotion was very deep, for Jesus cast seven devils out of her Mk.16:9. Mary displayed a special quality of devotion.
 - **The other Mary** was the mother of James and Joses. She also could not tear herself away from the body of Jesus indicating her love and devotion for Him.
2. Two reasons are given for the women coming to the tomb of Jesus.
 - a. Matthew says the women (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary) **came to see the sepulcher**. The Greek word **“to see”** (theoresai) means to contemplate, to gaze, to observe in order to grasp. They came to be close to their Lord, the One who meant so much to them, to mourn over Him, to think through all that had happened. This is an important point, for it perhaps explains why the women were more prepared to believe the miracle of the resurrection.

Thinking and meditating upon the Lord will help us to understand the Lord and prepare us to receive the great truth of His resurrection. *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord”...Is.1:18*

- b. Mark says the women came to anoint Him (Mk.16:1). They cared much, so they wanted to take care of His body as loved ones do.

The women are an example to us in taking care of the bodies of our loved ones.

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

III. The miraculous events of the resurrection (28:2-4).

28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. Things begin to happen suddenly!

1. **Behold there was a great earthquake.** The earthquake symbolized that a historical convulsion was taking place, an event that had never before happened. The quaking of the earth could not hold the Lord's body—Christ Jesus, the Son of God Himself. It was bound to happen!

Tragically He had been put to death by the hands of men, but gloriously He was being raised from the dead by the power of God (Rom.1:4; Eph.1:19-20). The resurrection of God's dear Son paved the way and prefigured the resurrection of all men. Therefore, man was resurrected from the dead; He would not die again.

2. **The angel of the Lord descended from heaven...rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.** The stone was not rolled back for the benefit of Christ, but for the witnesses to the resurrection. When Christ arose, He was in His resurrection body, the body of the spiritual dimension of being which has no physical bounds. But the witnesses needed to enter the tomb and see the truth. The angel rolled back the stone for the sake of the witnesses. He was a ministering spirit of God, serving by helping God's people.

28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:— This was an appearance like no other. The angel to Mary or angels to the shepherds were never described so vividly at the conception or birth of Jesus. This was an exception!

3. **The angel of the Lord countenance** (appearance) **was** dazzling.
 - i. **Just like lighting**—visible, quick, startling, striking, frightening, brilliant.
 - ii. **His raiment** (clothing) **was just like snow**—white, pure, glistening.

28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

4. There were **the keepers** (guards) who were in **fear; shaking, and became as dead men.** The guards witnessed the flashing appearance of the angel and the rolling back of the stone. The suddenness of the event, the brilliant appearance, and the enormous strength of the angel were like a volcanic eruption to them. They quaked, shook, and fell as dead men to the ground. They were either stricken unconscious or were so terrified it paralyzed them as dead men.

The power of God is awesome and terrifying. The guards had been told they were to guard a dead body against thieving men. They were totally unprepared and unable to stand against the power of God and His messenger (angel).

IV. The message from the angel of the resurrection (28:5-10).

28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, **Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.** When the women arrived at the tomb, they saw the dazzling angel sitting on the stone. Mark says they saw "*a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment*" (Mk.16:5). Luke says "*two men stood by them in shining garments*" (Lk24:4). Apparently, many angels were all about the tomb and the surrounding area attending Christ, joying and rejoicing over what God had done.

1. **And the angel answered and said unto the women, FEAR NOT ye:** The angel didn't speak to the guards, only the women. You have to remember this was just before dawn as the women went out. God knows the person who is seeking. He knows the movement of every heart.
 - a. **The reality of the resurrection brings joy, not fear.** Let not the news I have to tell you, be any surprise to you; let it be no terror to you; fear not any hurt, that I will do you. Be not afraid, remember the empty tomb.
 - b. **For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.** He's saying, '*you seek Him still, though He was crucified.*' That's what true believers do; you retain your kindness and love for Him.

28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

- c. **He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.** Jesus was not the first one brought back from the dead, for those He raised shall die again in this life, but Jesus was the first one resurrected and is still risen. Those that believe in Him shall live again with Him, for Jesus is not dead and is not to be looked for among the dead. He is alive! Jesus had told His disciples in Matt.16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 26:32 of this

d. very event.

2. **COME SEE** the place where the Lord lay. The women could check the evidence themselves. The tomb was empty then and is empty today. The resurrection is an historical fact! Jesus is not in the tomb! Believe and live!
- a. This is significant for the unbeliever because...
 - i. It verifies the Deity and Truthfulness of Jesus.
 - ii. It allows you to look at the evidence.
 - iii. It compels unbelievers to come face to face with reality, and the need to accept the Lordship of Jesus.
 - b. This is significant for the believer because...
 - i. It verifies our justification.
 - ii. It demonstrates that believers can become witnesses of the Lord's death and resurrection.
 - iii. It gives us hope concerning our own resurrection.

28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

c. **GO QUICKLY, AND TELL His disciples.** Sharing the glorious news is essential. Tell the news!

- c. **He is risen from the dead.** The angel commanded them to be the first messengers of the good news of Jesus' resurrection.
- d. **He goeth before you into Galilee...there shall ye see him:** He would reveal Himself to whom and to where He so desired;

...lo, I have told you:— The angel has told the women that He'll meet them and they shall see Him in Galilee. It was an appropriate honor. The discouraged believers (disciples) were the first ones the women were to tell. The disciples should have been the ones telling others, but because of fear and unbelief, it was the women that told the good news.

Matthew 28:8-10 The Women Meet The Risen Lord

28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

So these women, being duly informed by the instructions of the angel, were the first to believe Christ's resurrection. With haste the women did run.

- The women obeyed with fear and great joy. This was a strange mixture, however, at the same time, this was a healthy fear. They became the very first witnesses of the risen Lord.
- They had to go quickly to give witness of the news. The fear and joy together quickened their pace, and added wings to their motion. Those that are sent on God's errand must not loiter, or lose time.

They had a message to tell, and what a message it was! We should tell others what God has done for our souls, and what He has spoken to us.

³I can learn that being a witness is to simply believe that Jesus rose from the dead and to tell others about what happened. Being a witness doesn't mean that I have to be an expert in apologetics or know all the answers to tough questions about Christianity. But it's simply to know that the gospel is true and that Jesus is real and has changed my life. This is encouraging because I often think of witnessing as being an expert in the subject of Christianity. But I am reminded that it's about being a witness to who Jesus is and how he has changed my life.

28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them:— While they were rushing to tell the disciples about Jesus' resurrection; they ran right upon Jesus; they came face-to-face with Him. Christ's appearing to the women confirms the testimony of the angel and makes them eyewitnesses of His resurrection. In that culture the witness of women was not regarded very highly.

28:9b ...saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. This is a greeting that has joy attached to it; it literally means, "*Rejoice!*" These zealous women not only heard the first tidings of Him, but they

³ <http://koinoniatexas.org/2009/10/matthew-28-devotional-commentary-the-great-commission/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

held His feet and worshipped Him. Grasping someone's feet was a recognized act of supplication and homage. They threw themselves prostrate at His feet. The empty tomb, seeing the angel, and now seeing Jesus was enough to cause joy. He was not a spirit but flesh and bone that they could lay hold of. Their worship could not be held back. Jesus greeted them with a simple greeting and He did not refuse their worship. Seeing Him was the evidence of His resurrection.

28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid:— Jesus does not want us to be fearful in His presence. Jesus comforted them. He was the same Jesus with whom they had been with before His death; and they had no reason now to fear Him.

28:10b....go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. The word was given to the women again to tell. What Word? -"*...tell my brethren... go into Galilee.*" Jesus is now in His transfigured body; the body that had conquered death. And notice that Jesus is still calling His disciples "*brethren*". It was obvious that the next step God wanted them to take was to head to Galilee. Just as He had said, to them on the night He was betrayed, Matt. 26:32 "*...after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.*"

⁴Why, then, Matthew's record of a resurrection appearance in Galilee?

1. **First**, the Messiah emerges from a despised area . . . and first sheds his light on a despised people . . .; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit (5:3). For this reason, too, the risen Jesus first appears to women whose value as witnesses among Jews is worthless.
2. **Second**, '*Galilee of the Gentiles*' (4:15) is compatible with the growing theme of Gentile mission in this Gospel . . . and prepares for the Great Commission (28:18-20)."

This trip was 70 or 80 miles. This was no small step of obedience, but they went. You shall see Jesus when you are obedient!

Matthew 28:11-17 The Guards And The Disciples

V. The attempt to discredit the resurrection (28:11-15).

28:11 Now when they (women) were going, behold, some of the watch (soldiers) came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. Remember when you are obedient to the Master, there are things going on to counteract the truth. While the women are leaving the sepulcher to inform the disciples of what they had seen and heard both from the angel and of Christ, there were soldiers coming into Jerusalem that will cause a different stir. For it will not cause the truth to be revealed to the people. The "*watch*" are those guards that were placed at the tomb by the Sanhedrin as a precaution against the possibility of Jesus' body being stolen. Leaving their post was a capital offence; in other words they could be executed for such an act. These guards saw everything that happened, and reported it all back to the chief priests. They saw...

- The great earthquake.
- The coming of the angel with his countenance of lightning.
- The angel rolling the stone away and sitting on it.
- The body of Jesus was gone.
- Themselves passed out like dead men.

This was not what the chief priests wanted to hear.

28:12 And when they (the chief priests) were assembled with the elders (members of the Sanhedrin), and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers:— They were taking counsel to see how they could counteract what had happened at the tomb. Now comes the cover-up with the bribery to the soldiers because they didn't want the truth to spread and be believed by the people. Once a cover-up starts, it will continue to be a cover-up of lies. They all agreed upon this; the soldiers were to give a false account of what happened. They gave large money, probably a great deal more than they gave to Judas. They put money into their hands and a lie into their mouths.

28:13 saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. ⁵The improbability of this story is easily seen:

1. The soldiers would not dare go to sleep on guard. It was death.

⁴ <http://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Matthew+28:9>

⁵ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/peoples-new-testament/matthew/28.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

2. If they had gone to sleep they could testify nothing of what was done while asleep. Their testimony of what occurred then would be worthless.
3. The disciples did not expect a resurrection and would hardly believe it when it occurred.
4. They had shown themselves cowards and would not have dared to take his body away.
5. Had they dared, had the Roman soldiers slept, they could not have removed the stone and carried off the body without detection. It was a night lighted with the full moon and all the surroundings of Jerusalem were crowded with people attending the Passover.

What an absurd story, it was weak, but many Jews believe it unto this hour!

28:14 **And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.** As the soldiers live up to their part of the lie, the chief priests and elders would live up to their part of the deal. They took full responsibility for this action; assured them protection by setting things right with the governor; that is, if Governor Pontius Pilate should get wind of it; if it came to execution, no harm would come to the soldiers, for they would persuade the Governor otherwise. All knew the truth of what happened and still did not repent.

28:15 **So they took the money, and did as they were taught:—** People have all sorts of reasons for not believing; in this case it was to shut the mouths of the soldiers, and they loved the money rather than the truth; and the reputation of the chief priests and elders were at stake.

28:15b **...and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.** It is said that the Jews at that time sent emissaries in all directions to spread this false report. Some say He didn't die at all, but just "*swooned*" on the cross and revived in the tomb. Others say He really died, but His body was stolen. Still others suggest He really died, but His desperate followers hallucinated His resurrection. Today there is still a great stir over the resurrection; and there are still only two choices—to believe that Jesus rose from the dead or to be closed to the truth, denying it, ignoring it, or rationalizing it away.

28:16 **Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed for them.** It was not the twelve but the eleven because Judas had committed suicide. Eleven is mentioned so that the betrayal would not be forgotten. Jesus is to appear to the Eleven on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to go. Galilee, of course, was where Jesus began His ministry, and it had Gentile connotations because of the presence and proximity of many Gentiles. Just as the women who met the resurrected Jesus, the disciples met the risen Jesus as they did what He told them to do.

28:17 **And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.** The whole experience was so mysterious and overwhelming that some who assembled on this occasion doubted. The word "*doubted*" (Gr. *edistasan*) means "*hesitated*." They wondered what they were seeing. We know that even one of the Eleven, Thomas, doubted. However, when they saw Jesus, they didn't remain doubters any longer, but they worshiped Him.

SUMMARY:

This last Chapter of Matthew is short and to the point. According to the four gospels, Jesus rose from the dead following His crucifixion. It was the end of the Sabbath and it began to dawn. The two Mary's (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary) came to the tomb. There was the great spectacularness of an earthquake bringing forth the angel of the Lord. He rolled the stone away from the door and sat on it waiting to give the Good News: He told the women to **fear not... He Is Not Here for He Is Risen! Come see the place where he lay**, meaning, don't take my word, come see for yourself. Then he said **go quickly and tell the disciples He Is Risen from the dead...**, and **to meet Jesus in Gallilee for that is where they will see Him (28:1-7).**

As the women departed from the Sepulcher, to tell the disciples and literally met Jesus face-to-face. Jesus said, **All hail**, and the women didn't waste any time, they held His feet and worshipped Him. Jesus calmed them down and gave them the same message as the angel: **go tell my brethren...into Galilee, and there shall they see me**. How awesome is that! (28:8-10).

Meanwhile the chief priests and elders are plotting behind closed doors after hearing what really happened according to the soldiers that were left to guard the body of Jesus. The chief priests and elders didn't want the truth to get out. On hearing all this the chief priests and elders bribed the soldiers with money and put forth a lie into their mouths, telling them to say that the disciples came by night while they slept and stole the body. How absurd and weak can a lie get? The soldiers followed their orders and the money they received was their hush money to persuade and their assurance of the governor's protection if there was any trouble. So the lie is spread among the Jews and it is still going forth until this day. Whereas the chief priests used bribe money to commission the soldiers to spread lies, the resurrected Jesus used the promise of His power and presence to commission His disciples to spread the gospel. The eleven disciples met Jesus in Galilee on the mountain at the appointed place He had told them of. They saw Jesus, not a replica of Him; not a movie of Him. **They saw Jesus!** And wouldn't you know, some doubted, hesitated (28:11-17).

We can never doubt the real deal! The realness of Jesus in one's life is the change He has made in it. And you know nobody else could have done what's happened in your life except through and by Him! He's brought joy, because you can remember how you were and how you are now! He's brought peace because when you get alone with Him there is a peace that surpasses all your understanding! He did it! He's brought life because as we remember how faithful Jesus is to His Word, we can rest and be assured of our eternal life with Him. He got up out the grave with all power! He's Alive! He's not dead; He is Risen! And so shall we have that eternal life with Him!

APPLICATION:

This one great event in history has changed our lives and even the whole world. Once you understand that Jesus did not stay in the grave, that He conquered death, is alive now and forever, you'll know that He has all authority and power and it was all done for us! It is significant because it is eternal victory that we have!