

ROLLED BACK THE STONE

Matthew 28:1-10

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INTRODUCTION

- A. Have you ever thought how God did the resurrection all wrong?
 - 1. If by George Lucas or Stephen Spielberg – a much larger splash!
 - 2. Why was it so reserved and subdued?
 - a. No angels – no kings or dignitaries.
 - b. No parade in the streets.
 - c. Limited appearances – closest acquaintances and friends.
 - d. As many as 500 at one time.
 - 3. But consider:
 - a. Why not the resurrection at mid-morning, sun shining bright.
 - b. Jesus riding on a white stallion to Pilate’s Porch, where just a few days earlier He stood for judgment?
 - c. Sudden appearance in the midst of the Sanhedrin?
 - d. Why only 40 days on earth and not 6 months or a year.
- B. Perhaps a clue found in the Lord’s words in John 20.
 - 1. Jesus had appeared to the apostles the previous week, Thomas missing.
 - 2. After being told, Thomas will believe, ONLY if he sees and feels.
 - 3. It is what we all want – to “see” and “feel” so we can believe.
 - 4. This Sunday, Thomas in the room – Jesus appears.
 - a. “Place your finger in my hands, put your hand in my side.” v. 27
 - b. “Stop doubting, BELIEVE.”
 - c. Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” v. 28
 - d. *“Because you have seen Me, have you believed; blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.”* v. 29
 - 5. Consider another thought: Those who saw the resurrected Lord had no CHOICE but to believe in the resurrection.
 - a. The death was irrefutable.
 - i. The Romans soldier made sure He was dead.
 - ii. The Jewish leaders were glad He was dead.
 - iii. Those who prepared His body said He was dead.
 - iv. The stone in front of the tomb to make sure He would remain dead.
 - b. And now Jesus is standing right in the middle of the disciples – can’t say “I don’t think I will believe.”
 - 6. But every Christian since – including all of this morning – all believers since Jesus ascended fall into the category of BLESSED.
- C. FAITH requires the opportunity for rejection for it to be faith.
 - 1. Hebrews 11:1 – conviction of things not seen.
 - 2. If we don’t have the opportunity to say “I don’t believe” – then your faith is not real faith.

I. THE RESURRECTION ALLOWS US TO RECEIVE.

- A. What were the two Marys thinking about on the way to the tomb?
 - 1. Not that they would find an empty tomb.
 - 2. Not what they would say to Jesus the next time they saw Him.
 - 3. “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” Mk. 16:3
- B. On Friday, all of their HOPE in Jesus died when Jesus died.
 - 1. Walking to the tomb with heavy hearts.
 - 2. Hands full of spices to anoint the cold body.

3. They are going to the grave to GIVE – not to RECEIVE.
 4. They are willing to give to Jesus, expecting nothing in return.
- C. They received the GOOD NEWS spoken by an angel:
1. “He is not here; He is RISEN, just as He said.” Mt. 28:6

II. THE RESURRECTION ALLOWS US TO BELIEVE.

- A. The Scripture said there was an earthquake!
1. Just as when the earth shook when Jesus died, a violent earthquake when He arose!
 2. The stone had been rolled back – and the angel sat on it, victoriously. Mt. 28:2
- B. The elite Roman guards are like dead men.
1. They thought an easy assignment – keep women and the apostles away from the tomb.
 2. Ironic – The One who was dead is alive, the ones alive are dead.
- C. Why did the angel roll the stone away from the tomb?
1. He didn’t roll it away for Jesus – Jesus didn’t need it!
 - a. Had turned water into wine, healed the sick, fed the multitudes.
 - b. Gave sight to the blind, calmed the storm, raised the dead, walked through locked doors.
 2. The angel rolled the stone away for the women.
 - a. “Come, see the place where He was lying.” v. 6
 - b. Not for Jesus to be let out, but for the women to be let in, so they could see and believe.

III. THE RESURRECTION ALLOWS US TO LIVE WITHOUT FEAR.

- A. They were instructed to go and tell the disciples, “Jesus is risen from the dead!”
1. On the way, the Lord met the women and offered a greeting.
 2. The women are shocked and completely stunned, afraid.
 3. He tells them, “Do not be afraid.”
 4. “Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”
 - a. The men are more afraid than the women – hiding behind locked doors.
- B. The resurrected Jesus changed their lives forever!
1. These self-centered, unreliable followers – transformed into kingdom-minded, fearless evangelists!
 2. Men who ran for their lives from the Garden – now turning the world upside down.
 3. Willingly giving their lives for the resurrected Christ.

CLOSING

- A. The resurrection can have the same kind of transforming power in our lives.
1. Hebrews 2:14-15
 2. We do not have to fear living the life for Christ.
- B. Yes, God did the resurrection exactly right...if faith is critical.
1. Those who saw Jesus had no choice but to believe.
 2. We do – the choice to believe or not to believe – REAL FAITH.
 3. “...conviction of things not seen.”
- C. Do we believe in the resurrection of Jesus?
- We gazed not in the open tomb, where once Thy mangled body lay;
Nor saw Thee in that “upper room,” nor met Thee on the open way;
But we believe that angels said, “Why seek the living with the dead?
(sing) But we believe that angels said, “Why seek the living with the dead?”*