

2018 Resurrection Sunday

“Come!”

Matthew 28:1-10

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“Come!”

Scripture

Every Sunday is a wonderful day to consider the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But Easter Sunday is a particularly wonderful day to consider Jesus’ resurrection.

Today, I would like to read Matthew 28:1-10:

¹Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” ⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” (Matthew 28:1-10)

Introduction

For the past several months I have been preaching through Genesis 37-50. In my reading I came across a sermon

by Dr. James Montgomery Boice in which he explores the word "come."¹ It occurs 1,528 times in the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

"Come" is a common word. It is not thought about often, but it is a powerful and wonderful word, particularly when spoken to sinful men and women by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Boice says that the wonders of this word "come" can be seen in the following story. Some time ago the Reverend E. V. Hill, a great preacher from Los Angeles, was in Philadelphia speaking to an annual gathering of black Baptist churches. He was speaking on the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Dr. Hill is dramatic on any occasion, but he was especially so on this occasion. Seated next to him on the platform was the leader of the Baptist Federation. When he got to the point of the story in which Adam and Eve were driven from Eden, Dr. Hill took off his long, black preaching robe and placed it on his distinguished colleague, using it to represent his colleague's sin. Then he ordered him out of the church! For many long minutes Hill kept telling him to leave—as his friend got up from his seat, walked down the steps from the platform, turned and made his way down the center aisle to the main door of the church, and stepped outside.

Then Dr. Hill posted two "angels" (who were deacons) at the door and insisted that they do their job and not permit the leader of the federation of churches to return. There was a moment of silence after this outrageous demonstration.

But then Dr. Hill began to preach grace. He explained how sin separates us from the presence of a holy God, but how Jesus died on the cross to remove this sin. He explained the

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 1064-1070. Much of the material for this sermon is from Boice.

gospel invitation. Before Christ's work on the cross, God's word to us—like it was when he expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden—was “Go!” Because of our sin, God has driven us from his presence.

Now, however, his invitation is “Come!” At this point the preacher called to the “angel-deacons” who were still on duty in the back of the church and told them to throw the doors open. Then they were told to call the Baptist church leader to come back in, removing his black robe as they did so. At last the man was led back up the aisle to the platform, where he resumed his place at Dr. Hill's side.²

“Come.” It is such a simple word. We use it every day. But it is such a wonderful word, as when it was used in the context of the good news of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Like Adam and Eve, we all, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way, all because of our sin against our Creator and Redeemer. We deserve to be driven from his presence. But God has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. He did so because of his love for his own. Now he reaches out to all of us with the gospel invitation, “Come!”

Lesson

So, in our lesson today we learn that Jesus invites all people to come to him.

Let's learn about this as follows:

1. Jesus Calls Us to Come to Him (28:1-6)
2. Jesus Sends Us to Call Others to Come to Him (28:7-10)

² James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*, 1065.

I. Jesus Calls Us to Come to Him (28:1-6)

First, Jesus calls us to come to him.

Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb in Jerusalem. Three days later, on the day **after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week**, that is, on Sunday morning, **Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb** (28:1). In accordance with the burial custom of the day, they were going there to anoint the body of Jesus with spices (cf. Mark 16:1). It is very important to remember that the women were not going to the tomb of Jesus expecting a resurrection. They were going to the tomb to find a dead body so that they could anoint his body with spices.

When they got to the tomb, they were astonished to find an **angel** who **said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay"** (28:5-6). Here was Jesus' gracious invitation to the women through the angel, **"Come, see the place where he lay."** The angel wanted the women to come forward and see that Jesus was no longer there, because he has risen.

Dr. Boice suggests several reasons why we should see the tomb of Jesus and how we may profit by it.

First, we come to the tomb to see the humility of Jesus. Death, you see, was not a natural thing for Jesus. Jesus had never ever sinned or done anything deserving of death. Yet, Jesus set aside the glory of his deity and condescended to humble himself and take on human flesh in order to become the sin-bearer for sinners such as ourselves. Oh, the humiliation of Jesus who would set aside the prerogatives of deity and take on humanity, and then live and die and be buried in a tomb—to save sinners! When we look at the tomb we see the humility of Jesus.

Second, we come to the tomb to see the horror of sin that placed him there. As I mentioned, Jesus had never ever sinned or done one thing deserving of death. He was completely and utterly sinless. The reason Jesus died was to pay the penalty for sinners like us. The prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 53:5, “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” When we look at the tomb of Jesus, where he was buried, we should say, “It was my sin that brought him to this end. It was my sin that caused his death.”

Third, we come to the tomb to see where we also will lie, unless Jesus returns before that happens. Every one of us must die. A time will come when we will be separated from our things, our homes, our friends, and our loved ones. Billy Graham, who died just six weeks ago, recounts in his autobiography about the time when a university student asked him, “What is the greatest surprise you have found in life?” Dr. Graham wrote, “‘The brevity of it,’ [he] replied without hesitation. ‘Time moves so quickly, and no matter who we are or what we have done, the time will come when our lives will be over.’”³ Eternity is forever, but life is not. When we come to the tomb we learn of our mortality. We learn that all of us must die, and that we must prepare for the life that lies beyond this one.

Fourth, we come to the tomb to see that Jesus is no longer there. This is the most important reason. We come to the tomb not just to see the humility of Jesus, not just to see the horror of our sin that placed him there, not just to see that we too must die, but we come to the tomb to see that Jesus **“is not here, for he has risen, as he said.”** Jesus’ resurrection is God’s stamp of approval that Jesus successfully paid the penalty for

³ Billy Graham, *Just as I Am* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1997), 720.

sin. The empty tomb is one great evidence for the resurrection.

There are other evidences for Jesus' resurrection too. One evidence for Jesus' resurrection is the change in his apostles. Prior to his resurrection, they were filled with fear and anxiety. But, after Jesus' resurrection, they were bold and fearless proclaimers of the good news of Jesus' saving work. They were so convinced about his resurrection that all of them—with the exception of the Apostle John—died for their conviction about Jesus' resurrection. Men don't die for lies.

Another evidence for Jesus' resurrection is the change of the day of worship. Prior to Jesus' resurrection, the day of worship was the Sabbath, that is, Saturday. However, after Jesus' resurrection, the day of worship became Sunday, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead. The only reason the early Christians, who were almost all Jews, changed the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday is because of Jesus' resurrection.

But, the greatest evidence for Jesus' resurrection is the empty tomb. Actually, the tomb was not completely empty; Jesus' grave clothes were there, but the body of Jesus was gone. What accounts for the disappearance of Jesus' body? When the guards at Jesus' tomb told the chief priests that the body of Jesus was missing, they told the guards to tell people that his disciples came by night and stole him away while they were sleeping (cf. Matthew 28:11-15). But surely the disciples would not have been willing to die if they had stolen the body of Jesus? And if the enemies of Jesus had stolen his body, all they had to do was produce his body when the claims of the resurrection were made by the disciples. No. The only reasonable explanation for the empty tomb is the resurrection of Jesus!

And finally, we come to the tomb to see that if we believe in Jesus, then we also shall rise with him. Dr. Boice writes, "Jesus did not come to this earth to teach, die, and rise again in order that at

the last he might lose those for whom he died. He came, as the Scriptures say, to save to the uttermost those who believe on him. We are saved, not just in spirit in order that we might have fellowship with God now; not just in soul in order that we might be transformed during the days of our earthly life. We are saved in body also. The salvation that Jesus brings is complete. When we come to the empty tomb we see that one day we too shall rise and be with him.”⁴

Have you done that? Have you, as it were, heard the voice of the angel say to you, **“He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay”**? Have you investigated Jesus’ claim that he would rise from the dead? If you have never done so, you need to do that. And then, after you have investigated Jesus’ claim to have risen from the dead, you need to respond to his invitation to come to him in simple faith. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28–29, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

II. Jesus Sends Us to Call Others to Come to Him (28:7-10)

Second, Jesus sends us to call others to come to him.

After the women were invited to come and see the place where Jesus had lain, the angel continued and said to them, **“Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”** Quite understandably, the women **departed quickly from the tomb**

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*, 1068.

with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. But while they were on their way, behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me" (28:7-10).

Dr. Boice says, "The fact that Jesus was risen was good news, and good news must be passed on. If the women did not tell it, it would be proof that they did not recognize the good news for what it is."⁵

If you are a Christian here today, and I believe that many of you are Christians, then we have a commission to tell others about Jesus. If you have heard and answered the invitation of Jesus to come to him in faith and repentance, then it is now our responsibility to take the same invitation to others.

Let me give you two examples. *The first example is the disciples who followed Jesus as the result of John the Baptist's witness.* When John saw Jesus coming toward him, early in his ministry, he said of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29; cf. 1:36). Two of John's disciples heard John say this, and so they followed Jesus. When Jesus saw them following him, he asked them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" That was a polite way of asking if they could go with him and get to know him.

Jesus said to them, "Come and you will see."

The two disciples did come. They accepted the invitation of Jesus to come and see (just as the women accepted the angel's invitation to come and see). They spent a day and a night with Jesus. Then, apparently, on that same day one of these

⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*, 1068.

two disciples, Andrew, found his brother, Simon Peter, and brought him to Jesus.

Then, on the next day, Jesus found Philip, who in turn found Nathanael. Philip told Nathanael, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

Nathanael was skeptical. *Nazareth!* He exclaimed, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, “Come and see” (John 1:46; cf. John 1:29-51).

As Dr. Boice says, “Where did Philip learn to invite others to Jesus Christ in that fashion? He learned it where he had learned everything else: from Jesus. Jesus had told John’s two disciples: ‘Come, and you will see.’ They had come and had invited others to come. Now Philip does the same. He has been called by Jesus. Now he calls others. After they had spent time with him they were constrained to go out and call others to come also.”⁶

The second example is the woman of Samaria. One day she went to draw water at Jacob’s well, as she did every day. On this particular day she found Jesus sitting there, wearied as he was from his journey. He struck up a conversation with her during which he talked about spiritual matters. Eventually, Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here” (John 4:16). She did not want to talk about that, and tried to change the subject. But she quickly learned that Jesus knew “everything” about her. The amazing thing about Jesus was that even though he knew that she was a sinner, he did not drive her away from him, but had “come” to save her! As soon as she believed that Jesus was her Savior, she ran into the town and said to the

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*, 1069.

people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" (John 4:29).

As soon as the woman at the well in Samaria knew that Jesus had "come" to save her, she ran and invited all the people in the town to "come" to Jesus. The townspeople came to talk to Jesus, and they soon realized that he was indeed the Savior of sinners. In fact, they said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world" (John 4:42).

Conclusion

Let us respond—today—to Jesus' invitation.

Dr. Boice says, "I do not know of a more wonderful word in all the Christian vocabulary when it is fully understood. 'Come' is the great word of the gospel. It has been heard by millions and has brought peace to countless restless hearts and satisfaction to countless empty souls."⁷

If you have never responded to the great invitation to "come" to Jesus in faith and repentance, I invite you to do so now. Now is the time to come. Today is the day of salvation! "Come!"

And if you have responded to Jesus' great invitation, it is your privilege to pass it on. Tell others to come to Jesus so that they may know that this is indeed the Savior of the world. Amen!

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary*, 1069.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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