

Christ Jesus Lives!

Text: Mark 15:15-37-16:14

Introduction:

1. In our last message we looked at the death of Christ upon the cross which is the first part of the Gospel message (“Christ died for our sins”). In today’s message our primary focus will be upon the burial and resurrection of Christ.
2. The truth of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ has the power to totally transform your life. We will look at the sequence of events under three headings: 1. His Death 2. His Burial 3. His Resurrection.

I. CHRIST’S DEATH (VS. 37-41)

A. The Will causing His Death (Vs. 37)

1. Christ’s death was no ordinary death. He Himself determined the moment of His death.
2. John 10:17-18 “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. **No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.** This commandment have I received of my Father.”
3. Romans 6:23 reveals that the “wages of sin is death”. In order for Christ to provide the payment for sin’s wages, He had to die a real death.

B. The Wonders accompanying His Death (Vs. 38; Matt. 27:51-53)

Several miracles occurred the moment Jesus died:

1. There was a rending of the temple veil (Vs. 38). The time was 3pm in the afternoon right when the priests in the temple would have been busy with their activities for the evening sacrifice. The rent veil preaches a message that the way into God’s immediate presence is now available through Christ (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19).
2. There was the shaking of the earth. Matt. 27:51 “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; **and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;**”
3. There was the rising of the saints. Matt. 27:52-53 “And the graves were opened; and **many bodies of the saints which slept arose,** And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

C. The Witnesses viewing His Death (Vs. 39-41)

1. The Centurion (Vs. 39)
 - a. A ‘centurion’ was a commander of 100 soldiers (Hiebert). He was the one in charge of the crucifixion and directly accountable to Pilate (See Vs. 45).
 - b. He was standing “over against him”, meaning he was standing opposite Christ in full view of all that happened.

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- c. Whether his confession was a saving one or not we are not told but we do know that a confession of Christ from the heart is what God requires for salvation (Romans 10:9-10, 13).
- 2. The Women (Vs. 40-41)
 - a. Saved followers (Vs. 40) What all these women had in common was that their lives had been transformed by Christ.
 - i. Mary Magdalene – before she met Christ she was a demon possessed woman. Mark 16:9 “...Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.” (See also Luke 8:2)
 - ii. Mary –noted as the mother of “James the less and of Joses”. John’s Gospel mentions that she was the wife of Cleophas (Jn. 19:25). Cleopas appears to have been one of the two disciples who met Christ on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:18).
 - iii. Salome – the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John.
 - b. Serving followers (Vs. 41)
 - i. This verse specifically notes that these women had ministered to Christ during his great Galilean ministry.
 - ii. Luke 8:2-3 “And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which **ministered unto him of their substance.**”
 - iii. Challenge: There is a great need for servants who will have a ministry of helps behind the scenes. As you follow the record of Christ’s public ministry, these dear ladies are hardly mentioned and yet the Bible reveals they were there in the background as a part of Christ’s ministry team, ministering to the practical needs of the Gospel ministry.
 - iv. Challenge: Is your ‘substance’ available for the service of the Master?

II. CHRIST’S BURIAL (VS. 42-47)

Observe 4 truths about the burial of Christ revealed in these verses:

A. The Period of the Burial (When?) (Vs. 42)

- 1. The hour of the burial (Vs. 42a) It says “when the even was come”. This was the “first evening, from mid-afternoon to sunset. It was probably around 4pm when Joseph secured permission to remove the body.” (Hiebert)
- 2. The day of the burial (Vs. 42b) There are two specific statements that pinpoint the day Christ died and was buried:
 - a. “the preparation” – this was a technical name for Friday, the day of the preparation for the Sabbath. No work was allowed to take place on the Sabbath so Friday served as a day to prepare for it.
 - b. “that is, the day before the sabbath” = Mark explains very clearly what “the preparation” refers to. The day before the sabbath is

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Friday. Therefore, the concept of Easter Friday is NOT a pagan idea. The alleged difficulty in relation to 3 days and 3 nights can be explained by understanding the Jewish way of counting the days.

- c. Excerpt from article by Jonathan Sarfati: “In Jewish counting, a part of a day was counted as a whole day (a figure of speech known as *synecdoche*). So, while X days and X nights *can* mean what it means in English, this was only a *subset* of its semantic range in Jewish idiom. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* explains (as cited in the Tektonics Apologetics article on this topic): ‘In Jewish communal life part of a day is at times reckoned as one day; e.g., the day of the funeral, even when the latter takes place late in the afternoon, is counted as the first of the seven days of mourning; a short time in the morning of the seventh day is counted as the seventh day; circumcision takes place on the eighth day, even though of the first day only a few minutes remained after the birth of the child, these being counted as one day.’¹

B. The Person organising the Burial (Who?) (Vs. 43-45)

1. Joseph’s Person (Vs. 43a)
He was...
 - a. An honourable man. Luke describes him as a “good man, and a just” (Luke 23:50).
 - b. A spiritual man – “which also waited for the kingdom of God”. John 19:38 reveals he was “a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews,”
 - c. A “rich man” (Matt. 27:57) This was significant prophetically. Isaiah 53:9 “And he made his grave with the wicked, and **with the rich in his death;**”
 - d. A member of the Sanhedrin who had “not consented to the counsel and deed of them” (Lk. 23:51)
 - e. A secret disciple due to fear of the Jews (John 19:38). Up until this point Joseph had been a timid and fearful follower of Christ. But now something changes! He goes in **‘boldly’** to Pilate (Vs. 43) to request the privilege of burying Christ’s body.
 - f. Scroggie: “Through these momentous months his love had been subjected to his fear, but now, in this hour of crisis, love rises triumphant over fear.”
2. Joseph’s Partner (John 19:39)
 - a. “And there came also **Nicodemus**, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.”
 - b. He was also a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (John 7:50).
3. Joseph’s Plea (Vs. 43b) The word ‘craved’ means to ask or beg. If it weren’t for Joseph’s heart to see Christ receive a proper burial, His body would likely have been dumped in a common grave along with the other criminals.
4. Pilate’s Permission (Vs. 44-45)

¹ <https://creation.com/easter-and-good-friday-questions-and-answers>? Viewed 4/4/21

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- a. Pilate surprised to hear that Christ already dead and verifies the fact by speaking to the centurion.
- b. John 19:31-37 – Steps taken to make sure of Christ's death.
- c. Note: These facts refute the foolish idea promoted by some that Christ didn't really die but that he only appeared to die.

C. The Process of the Burial (How?) (Vs. 46a)

1. Fine linen – “And he bought fine linen”. The word ‘bought’ means “to buy, purchase.” Joseph used his financial means to serve His Christ.
2. Spices – John 19:40 “Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”

D. The Place of the Burial (Where?) (Vs. 46b-47)

1. “hewn out of a rock” = Edmond Hiebert explains the tomb “had been cut out horizontally into the side of a rock cliff. Such carefully hewn tombs were common around Jerusalem and generally belonged to well-to-do families.”
2. “rolled a stone” = this would have been “a large, circular, flat stone, fitted with a groove, which could be rolled back to open the tomb when necessary.” (Hiebert) The circular stone “fitted into a slopping groove, so arranged that it ran down an incline.” (John Phillips)
3. John's Gospel reveals the sepulchre was close to the site of the crucifixion. John 19:41-42 “Now in the place where he was crucified there was **a garden**; and in the garden **a new sepulchre**, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for **the sepulchre was nigh at hand**.”
Note: Consider the significant gardens in the Bible (e.g., the garden of Eden, Gethsemane & the garden of the burial & resurrection).
4. Verse 47 records that two of the women witnessed where Christ was buried.

III. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST (VS. 1-14)

Observe 3 truths about the resurrection in these verses:

A. The Arrival of the Women (Vs. 1-5)

In all four Gospels this is the first incident on resurrection morning. Luke adds the name of Joanna and “other women with them” (Lk. 24:10).

1. Their coming to the tomb (Vs. 1-2)
 - a. The time of their coming
 - i. After the Sabbath had passed.
 - ii. Very early in the morning.
 - iii. The first day of the week.
 - iv. At the rising of the sun.
 - b. The purpose for their coming
 - i. They had purchased sweet spices to anoint Christ's body as an act of devotion and love.
 - ii. This was not the same as embalming. “The purpose apparently was to add externally their fragrant ointments as an expression of their love.” (Hiebert)

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- iii. Clearly these dear ladies had forgotten Christ's promise concerning His resurrection and were coming in the full expectation that He was still dead in the tomb. Luke 24:5-6 "And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: **remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,**"
2. Their problem at the tomb (Vs. 3)
 - a. The major point of discussion between these women was how they were going to roll away the stone from the door.
 - b. Evidently there were not aware of the sealing of the tomb and of the guards that were stationed there (Matt. 27:62-66).
3. Their entry into the tomb (Vs. 4-5)
 - a. They found the stone already rolled away! Matthew's Gospel explains how the stone was removed.
 - b. Matthew 28:1-4 "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 sepulchre. **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.** His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*."

B. The Announcement of the Angel (Vs. 6-8)

1. His Declaration (Vs. 6)
 - a. "he is risen; he is not here" = what glorious words of victory! Luke's account expresses it this way, "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and **found not the body of the Lord Jesus.** And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, **Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen...**" (Lk. 24:1-6)
 - b. "behold the place where they laid him" = the place where Christ was laid was on the right side of the tomb (Vs. 5). All that was left was the graveclothes and the napkin lying there as a silent witness to the truth that Christ had risen (John 20:5-7).
2. His Instruction (Vs. 7-8)
 - a. The instruction was to "go" and "tell".
 - b. Our mission is the same. We are to testify to the truth of the resurrection of Christ.
 - c. The preaching of the resurrection was a central theme in the preaching of the early church (refer Book of Acts).

C. The Appearances of the Lord (Vs. 9-14)

Three of the post resurrection appearances are documented here. Acts 1:3 says, "To whom also he shewed himself **alive** after his passion by

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many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” A key theme is the initial response of unbelief on the part of the disciples.

1. Christ’s appearance to Mary Magdalene (Vs. 9-11)
 - a. A woman was the first in to sin but it is of interest to note that women were the first to see the empty tomb and that Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Christ.
 - b. Mary goes to the disciples who were “mourning and weeping” and told them she had seen Christ but they “believed not”. Luke 24:9-11 “And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them **as idle tales, and they believed them not.**”
 - c. Unbelief was the first heart response of the disciples to the truth of the resurrection. This is the natural tendency of the human heart. Thankfully, for the disciples their issue was one of doubt, not a stubborn, unrepentant unbelief like the unsaved. They would soon be convinced of the truth of the resurrection and would proclaim it with great power to others.
 - d. The truth of the resurrection is essential for salvation (Rom. 4:25; 10:9-10). The Apostle Paul confronts the Paul faces the implications of no resurrection head on in 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
 - i. No resurrection means Christ is dead! (Vs. 13, 16).
 - ii. No resurrection means Apostolic preaching empty (Vs. 14a).
 - iii. No resurrection means our faith is empty (14b).
 - iv. No resurrection makes the Apostle’s liars (Vs. 15).
 - v. No resurrection means we are still in our sins (Vs. 16-17).
 - vi. No resurrection means departed Christians have perished (Vs. 18).
 - vii. No resurrection means a life of misery and hopelessness (Vs. 19).
 - viii. Paul forces us to stare this dreadful idea in the face that we might see it in all its blackness. Then he deals it a fateful blow with a powerful assertion of the truth. (Vs. 20)
2. Christ’s appearance to the two disciples (Vs. 12-13)
 - a. This appearance of Christ is documented at length in Luke’s Gospel (Lk. 24:13-35).
 - b. Sadly, the disciple’s response to these two witnesses was also one of unbelief.
3. Christ’s appearance to the eleven (Vs. 14) Christ rebukes the disciples sternly for not believing the eye witness accounts. The eye witness accounts simply verified what Christ promised He would do all along.

Conclusion: Will you repent and receive Christ as your Saviour today? He is alive and able to save you from your sin.