

John 19: 28 – 20: 17; “Running to the Tomb to See”, An Easter Sunday Sermon
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall, on April 9th, 2023,
in the Morning Worship Service.

On this Resurrection Sunday, I would like you to see the zealous excitement of Peter and John, and even Mary, to run to find out what had happened to the body of Jesus. They were eager to know what had happened to His body. They thought that it had been moved by men. They did not know it, at first that morning, that He had risen from the dead! But they came to know it after they ran to find out. And even so, in this message I want you to see that there is every reason for all disciples of Christ to run and see in their minds and hearts concerning whether the Lord Jesus is risen from the dead. Christ's resurrection is something very great and wonderful to meditate upon, each and every day, because He will help you to run your race, the race of this life, with endurance. I want you to try and grasp the idea that we as disciples of Christ should not only walk by faith in relation to the Lord Jesus in this life. But we should also run by faith until we shall meet Him face to face.

1st of all – The Lord Jesus endured the cross and gave up His spirit in death, so that you might run and see the outcome of His life for yourself.

Let us think for a few minutes about Jesus' final sufferings on the cross so that we might see how it relates to us personally and spiritually. It is interesting to note that the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ began with His turning water into wine. And now, at the time that He is hanging there, dying on the cross, wine providentially comes into the picture once again. Our Lord became thirsty, and He says so here in verse 28. “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’” And so, those who were standing by, seeing that there was a vessel of sour wine sitting there, they filled a sponge with it and they put it on hyssop, and they put it to His mouth. What does this mean for us?

Well, it means that Christ had to suffer this thirst so that when you come to Him you will never thirst spiritually speaking because you have Him in your life. Jesus said in John 6: 35 – “I am the bread of life.” “He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” And not only is this true, that if you believe in Jesus that you will never thirst spiritually for anything more than what He can give you in giving you the water of life, you also will never lack for the wine of joy that Jesus can give to you continually in your spirit. That wine which makes Your heart glad every day, is that You have Him as your Savior, Your Shepherd, Your Lord and Your King. You can rejoice in the Lord always, and You should rejoice.

You will recall that back in John chapter 2, verse 1, that it says there – On the third day (That is the 3rd day of Jesus' public ministry) there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. And it says there that the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus and His disciples were invited to this wedding too. And when they ran out of wine, Jesus' mother Mary said to Him that they had no wine. And He made this unusual statement to her – Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come. Now, Jesus when He said this was not disrespecting His mother in giving her this answer. She knew that He was the Son of God and that He was able to do this miracle, even though He had not yet publicly done any miracles.

She knew that He could help them. And she probably thought: What better place to do a miracle than here at this wedding. Jesus was answering her in this holy way: What do I have to do with doing miracles at your bidding? And why does your concern for the wine running out at this wedding feast have anything to do with my business of doing My Father's will in every situation? I must first of all please Him, in all that I do, and only do a miracle at His bidding. But Mary, by the Spirit's working I believe, knew that this was the time to begin. And so she says to the servants in verse 5 – Whatever He says to you, do it. And you will notice that Jesus then did give instructions to the servants to fill the waterpots which had formerly held wine, with water. And it

says that they filled them to the brim. And then it says, He told them to draw some of the water which He had changed to wine, and take it to the master of the feast.

They did so, and then it says in verse 10 that the master of the feast called the bridegroom and he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior.’ “You have kept the good wine until now!” And then John’s comment in verse 11 is this – “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and *He* manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” So, what I want you to see is that this miracle of turning the water into wine is what He began His earthly ministry with, and He ended His earthly ministry by saying – “It is finished” in John 19: 20. He said this just after He had received the sour wine which was given to Him in a sponge, lifted up to His mouth with a hyssop branch, and touching His mouth.

What we should think of when we hear of this great thirst? We should think of it as spiritual as well as physical. His thirst was not simply thirst due to His great physical sufferings, although it was that. His thirst was for the completion of our redemption. For He knew that He had come to cross to die. He had come for the finishing of the purchase that He made of everyone who believes in Him. He could not ultimately be satisfied in His quest for our salvation until He had died for us. Certainly He could not have been satisfied, or his thirst quenched, by drinking sour wine. It was just the opposite! But at that time His glory was manifested in this; that He knew that in and by His sufferings, He would complete the work of our redemption.

Right after He received the sour wine, He said – It is finished! And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. And so, we see that Jesus’ glory was manifested even in that late hour when all was darkness and blackness in the sky from the 6th hour til the 9th hour. For all those standing by, who had the spiritual eyes to see, He was triumphing in His death. In Mark 15: 37-39 it says – “And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.” “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” “So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, ‘Truly, this Man was the Son of God.’”

His glory was revealed somewhat secretly in the miracle of changing the water into wine. He did not publicly manifest His glory through His saying – I am now going to do this miracle. Instead He simply commanded the servants to fill the waterpots with water, and then secretly did the miracle. But His glory was manifested in the master of the feast’s tasting of the wine. But still, he did not know who had done the miracle yet. But those who followed Jesus and believed in Him, they knew. Here in John 19, the ignominy of His death would set the stage for His glorious resurrection. The word “ignominy” means publicly being disgraced, being treated with public contempt. It means being treated in a very shameful way.

The word ignominia is a Latin word meaning against name or reputation. Even though our Lord Jesus Christ was the God-Man, infinitely higher in position than any man, in the Mind of His Father who sent Him, yet according to His holy and wise plans, it says in Isaiah 53: 10, it would please Him to bruise and to crush His Son at the cross. He would make Him an offering for sin. And He would make Him this offering through His being treated in a most awful way – for our sakes, because of our sins. And yet out of this ignominious death there would come the greatest glory that could possibly be imagined. The glory of His resurrection, and the glory of ours in Him. A glory where one would want to come and see what happened to Jesus’ body after the cross.

The Father was watching over His Son very carefully, even then, in terms of all of the Scriptures concerning His Son being fulfilled. Verses 31-37 speaks of not one of His bones being broken by the soldiers, a fulfillment of Psalm 34, verse 20. Verse 34 here in John 19, speaks of one of the soldiers piercing His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. This was to show us the glory of what His love for sinners would bring to them. His heart was pierced and literally spiritually, and literally physically, broken for us, so that believing in Him we

can be cleansed from all sin. As the hymn-writer says – Let the water and the blood, from Thy riven side which flowed; be of sin the double cure – Save from wrath and make me pure. These things are written for our sakes so that we might run and see for ourselves the outcome of Christ's life.

The outcome of His life was that He died an ignominious death, but He was raised to a glorious resurrection. After Jesus died on the cross, no one came running right away to see Him, for His body must lay in the tomb until the 3rd day. But I think that it is likely that Joseph of Arimathea did run quickly to Pilate that very evening, so that he could ask for the body of Jesus. This he was granted. And after he and Nicodemus had bound the body of Jesus in strips of linen cloth with spices, he put Jesus in his own new tomb in the garden, which was near the place where Jesus was crucified. So, here were two men who had been secret disciples before, because of their fear of the Jews. But now they were no longer afraid.

Now that they had seen Jesus die on the cross, they were becoming living examples of Paul's verse in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4, verses 8-10. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair. We are persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. Joseph and Nicodemus were now, at this point, willing to suffer for Christ at this critical point.

How about you? Will you run to Jesus today in your mind and heart, to see the outcome of His life and His death be manifested in you? Do you want to behold more of His glory as you live your life to Him? Will you bear about in your body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in your mortal flesh? If so, if you are willing to do this, you shall see the glory of God manifested in your life where you may have been weak in your service to Him before.

2nd – The Lord Jesus rose early on the 1st day of the week so that your faith might be personally built and established. (Chapter 20, verses 1-10)

“And on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.” “Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” Now, if you look at the other gospels, you see that in Luke it says in chapter 24, verse 10, that it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. Mary and the other women came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, but Jesus rose from the dead earlier than this. He did this, He rose earlier than their arrival, for their sakes, to build and establish their faith in Him.

This, by the way, He also does for all of His disciples. He, as the risen Christ goes before us in everything, so that He can build and establish our faith. This is what caused these women to run. It was their love and concern for their Lord; to care for His body. But it was more than that. They wanted to see the outcome of His death. What would it mean? In Matthew's gospel it says in chapter 28, verses 5-8, that the angel told the women – “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.” “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.” “Come and see the place where the Lord lay.” “And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him.” “Behold I have told you.” “So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.”

It seems to me that what these women probably did, was to run and tell all of the disciples about this, perhaps dividing up, to bring it to as many of them as they could. Mary herself ended up at Peter's house. And John was there with Peter. Now, I find it interesting to try to reconcile these two accounts. Because none of these women had yet seen the risen Lord, but the account in Matthew says that they were all told that Jesus was risen from the dead. And they were all told

to tell this to Christ's disciples. And yet when Mary gets to Peter and John to tell them, she doesn't tell them that Jesus was risen, as the angel had told her to tell them. She only says that they had taken Him out of the tomb and they didn't know where they laid Him.

It seems that Mary did not remain long enough to hear all the words of the angel to the other women that Jesus was risen. Sometimes it is possible to move too fast. In this case Mary didn't wait. She ran as fast as she could to talk to Peter and John. She tells them that someone had taken the Lord from the tomb and that she and the other women didn't know where they had laid Him. But I want you to see that all of this was in the Lord's hands. He would reveal Himself to them all. But it would be in His own time and way. Peter and John immediately went out and were going toward the tomb. And they both ran together, probably with Mary right behind them.

John being the younger man, it appears that he was faster than Peter. He got to the tomb first. And he stooped down and looked in, and he saw the linen clothes that Jesus' body had been wrapped in. He saw them lying there. He did not go in. He deferred to Peter who he knew always wanted to be first in everything. Simon Peter came up, following him, and he went right in to the tomb, and he too saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief which had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then John says, he went in also, and he saw and he believed. Believed what? Believed that his Lord Jesus had risen from the dead! And then this very interesting comment in verse 9 – For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

What an amazing thing! That even though all of the disciples had walked with Jesus for 3 and a half years, and had even heard Him say that He would be treated badly by the scribes and the Pharisees, crucified, and then raised from the dead, they did not understand. They did not experientially know and believe the Scripture that He must rise from the dead. But yet they had, from the beginning of His calling of them, known Him personally as their Lord. This is something that each one of us should take notice of, as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. You may have known the Lord for a long time, and yet still not know, in some great respects, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.

In this regard, you may still have much to learn. The Lord Himself may need to personally reveal to you how to count all things as loss for the excellence of knowing Him. You may need to seek to win Christ, that is to know Him better, if in any way you are trusting in your own righteousness, or your own strength to live the Christian life. But Paul said that this is what he had to do. And so will you. You will need to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings so that you will be more conformed to His death, and by any means attain to the resurrection from the dead.

And 3rd – The Lord Jesus does reveal Himself to His seeking disciples according to their love for Him. (Chapter 20, verses 11-18)

Look at Mary's great love for her Savior and Lord. "But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped and looked into the tomb." "And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." "Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?'" "She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.'" "Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus." "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?'" "Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.'" "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'" "She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!'" "(which is to say, Teacher). "Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and said to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" "

What I want you to see here is the great love which Mary had for the Lord Jesus, to find Him that day. Even just to find His dead body, which she thought had been carried away. Even just to lay the spices on it that she had prepared. Jesus was so precious to her, that her love impelled her to continue to seek Him until she found Him. She didn't realize that she was speaking to Him there in the garden. She thought at first that He was the gardener. "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

What love is this! That she would single-handedly, if she could, carry His body to a place where she and the other disciples could show Him respect and cry over Him in their love for Him. She loved Jesus in this amazing way because she knew what Jesus had done for her soul. It says in Mark 16, verse 9 – "Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons." Jesus was touched with the greatness of her love for Him, and so He revealed Himself first to her on His resurrection morning. All He had to do was to speak one word – Mary! And she knew who it was! Let me ask in closing this question – Does Jesus know your love for Him; that you love Him so very much because He loved you first? You realize that Jesus is so very great in love that when He went to the cross, He could think of you personally and particularly as He hung there dying on the cross? It is the same, now that He is raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father.