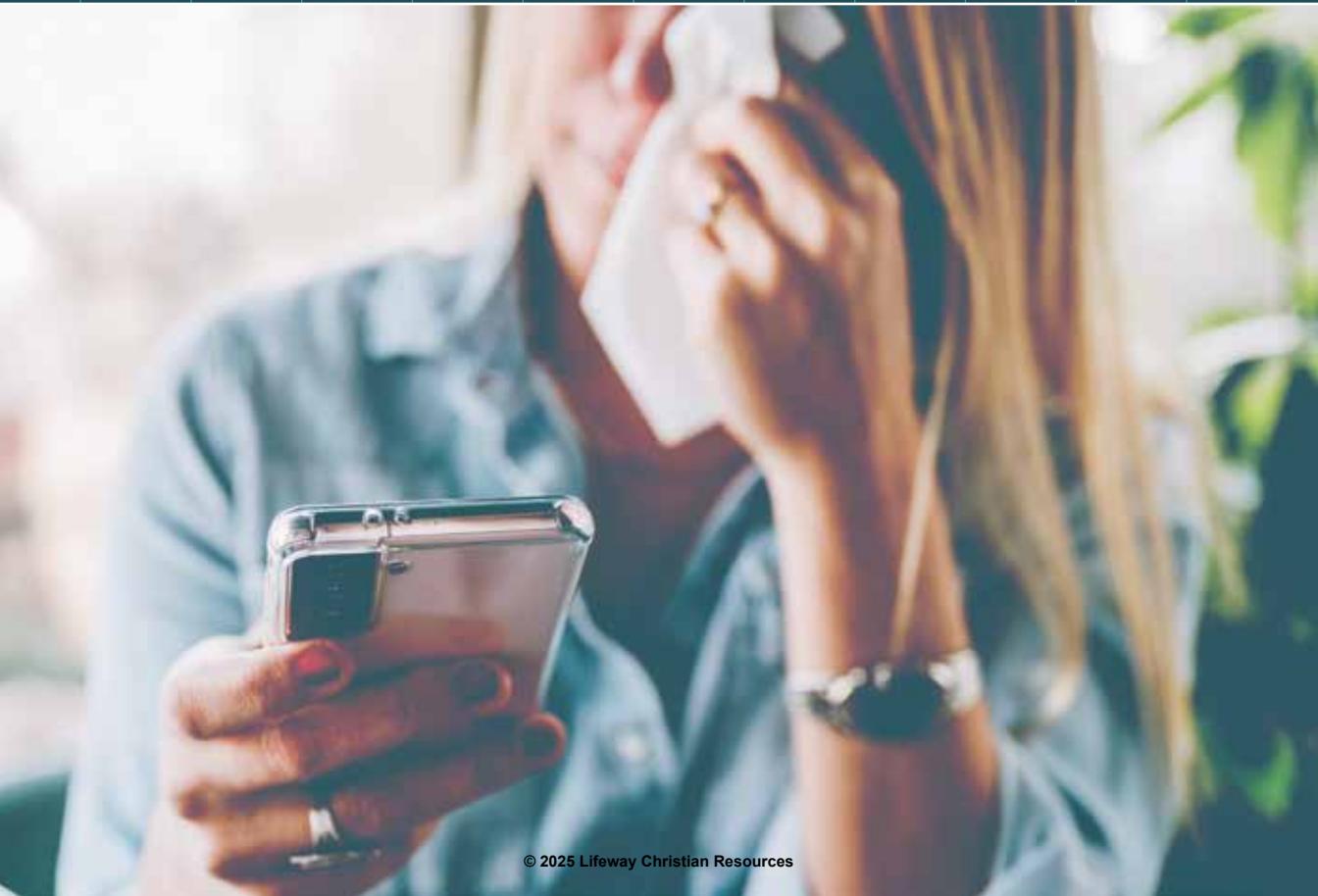


SESSION 6

Our Task

MATTHEW 28:1-10, 16-20

BECAUSE JESUS ROSE FROM THE GRAVE, WE ARE TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO ALL PEOPLE.



Most of us often remember the moments we received bad news. We probably remember where we were and what we were doing on September 11, 2001. Interestingly, sometimes we don't remember details when we receive good news. The joy of the news overshadows the specifics of how and when the news was received. This was not the case for the eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection. They could look back on the greatest news of all and remember vividly.

WHY DO YOU THINK WE ARE SELECTIVE IN WHAT
WE REMEMBER AND WHAT WE FORGET?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The resurrection of Jesus is central to our faith as Christians. All the Old and New Testament find their fulfillment in Christ—His death and resurrection. The resurrection is crucial to the gospel message of salvation through Jesus. If Jesus had not risen, nothing would have been accomplished by His death. The resurrection is God's stamp of approval on all that Jesus did on the cross.

The resurrection is also factual. One of the most powerful testimonies in court is the word of eyewitnesses. Each of the Gospel writers in their own way highlighted the role of eyewitnesses to Jesus's resurrection. Matthew, in his account, chose to emphasize the eyewitness account of two women: Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary. In addition, Matthew's Gospel highlights the witness of the eleven disciples that met Jesus in Galilee.

The previous chapter is needed to understand some of the narrative in Matthew 28. Matthew 28:12-14 speaks of the Roman guards receiving a bribe from the Jewish priests and elders to spread the rumor

that the disciples had stolen Jesus's body from the tomb. Reaching back to Matthew 27:62-66, we learn that the Jewish leaders remembered Jesus's prediction of His resurrection. Because of that, they went to Pilate and secured Roman soldiers to guard the tomb. Matthew 28:4 indicated that these guards fainted in fear at the angels.

Later, these guards reported what had happened to the chief priests. It was at this point that they were given a bribe to spread the lie that Jesus's body had been stolen. Matthew, writing sometime around AD 63, indicated that this false story was still circulating in an attempt to deny the reality of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is central to our faith as Christians. All the Old and New Testament find their fulfillment in Christ—His death and resurrection. The resurrection is crucial to the gospel message of salvation through Jesus. If Jesus had not risen, nothing would have been accomplished by His death. The resurrection is God's stamp of approval on all that Jesus did on the cross.



Matthew 28:1-10,16-20

1 After the **Sabbath**, **A** as the first day of the week was dawning, **Mary Magdalene** **B** and the **other Mary** **C** went to view the tomb. **2** There was a **violent earthquake**, **D** because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and approached the tomb. He **rolled back the stone** **E** and was sitting on it. **3** His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. **4** The guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men. **5** The angel told the women, “Don’t be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. **6** He is not here. For he has risen, **just as he said**. **F** **Come and see** **G** the place where he lay. **7** Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there.’ Listen, I have told you.” **8** So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his disciples the news. **9** Just then Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” They came up, took hold of his feet, and **worshiped him**. **H** **10** Then Jesus told them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there.” [. . .] **16** The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. **18** Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go, therefore, and **make disciples** **I** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am **with you always**, **J** to the end of the age.”

Key Words

A. From sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday, a day of rest according to the law (see Ex. 20:8-11). Jesus was raised on Sunday.

B. Jesus had delivered Mary from seven demons (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2).

C. Likely the mother of James and Joseph. She also was at the cross and the burial (Matt. 27:56,61).

D. This supernatural event was caused by an angel arriving at the empty tomb.

E. Not to let Jesus out, but so His followers could look inside and see that He was risen.

F. On multiple occasions, Jesus had stated clearly that He would be crucified, buried, and raised. See Matthew 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; 20:19.

G. Eyewitness accounts of the empty tomb affirm the factual, historical nature of the resurrection.

H. Accepting worship confirmed Jesus’s deity. The disciples also worshiped Him in verse 17.

I. The primary command of the Great Commission. This is done through going, baptizing, and teaching those who believe.

J. Jesus’s power (v. 18) and His presence (v. 20) ensure that believers can fulfill His commission (v. 19).

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Believe

(Matt. 28:1-7)

We can trust that Jesus is risen because the tomb was empty.

- **What obstacles might cause some people to struggle with faith in the risen Christ?**

2. Worship

(Matt. 28:8-10)

Our appropriate response to Jesus's resurrection is worship.

- **What emotions did the women experience as they went to tell the disciples about Jesus's resurrection? How did they respond to Jesus's appearing to them?**
- **How would you have responded to such an unexpected encounter with Jesus?**

3. Share

(Matt. 28:16-20)

Believers are to share the gospel with people of all nations.

- **What does this passage teach us about our role in Christ's mission?**

Apply the Text

- **Consider how your group might have responded had you met Jesus in Galilee. Would you worship or doubt? Ask each participant how their choice would impact their daily life. Discuss ways that your group can share the good news of the resurrection of Jesus with those in their world.**

KEY DOCTRINE:

Evangelism and Missions

The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. (See Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8.)

BIBLE SKILL:

Compare passages that share the same account.

Read Matthew 28:1-15 again and record significant points related to the resurrection. Then, read the resurrection passages in Mark 16:1-20; Luke 24:1-52; John 20:1-22 and do the same for them. What similarities do you see in these passages? What are some differences that help you get a more complete picture of the events surrounding the resurrection?

DAILY EXPLORATION



Day 1: Matthew 28:1-4

Compare verse 2 to Matthew 27:51.

The eyewitnesses to the resurrection included the angels, the soldiers, and a group of women. Matthew identified two of the women as “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.” Mary Magdalene was the one whom Jesus delivered from demon possession (Luke 8:2). The other Mary was the mother of the disciple known as James the younger (Mark 16:1). These two women were joined by Salome, the mother of James and John (Mark 16:1). These women had prepared spices to anoint Jesus’s body. Early on Sunday they went to the tomb with the intent of finishing the burial procedures.

As they approached the tomb, a severe earthquake occurred. The cause of this earthquake was the coming of “an angel of the Lord” to roll away the stone covering the tomb’s entrance. His purpose was not just to show that the tomb was empty but also to announce that Jesus was risen.

The appearance of the angel terrified the guards who guarded the tomb. They were “so shaken by fear” that they evidently passed out from the sight. The word *shaken* is from the same root word as earthquake. These soldiers had their own earthquake! They, too, became eyewitnesses to this event and had to be paid off by the priests (28:11-15) to prevent them from telling what they had seen and heard.

**Why did the angel roll back the stone?
What convinces you of the reality of
Jesus’s resurrection?**



Day 2: Matthew 28:5-7

Compare verse 5 to Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:30; 2:10.

No doubt the women were terrified by the sight of the angel. He who spoke to them said, “Don’t be afraid.” The angel then indicated that he knew why the women were there. However, there was no body to anoint. Jesus had risen from the dead. The angel reminded the women of the words of Jesus about His coming resurrection (see Matt. 17:22-23). He verified his announcement by showing the women the empty “place where he lay.”

The angel also had a commission for them to carry out: “go quickly and tell his disciples.” They were instructed to tell the disciples that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. This meeting would be a fulfillment of the promise given by Jesus in Matthew 26:32. This upcoming appearance in Galilee was one of several appearances recorded in the Gospels. Keep in mind that Jesus continued to appear to the disciples for forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3).

Why Galilee? Perhaps Jesus wanted privacy from all the turmoil of Jerusalem. Also, Galilee was a mixed population of Jews and Gentiles. At this appearance, Jesus would give His disciples a commission to take the gospel message into all the world, to both Jews and Gentiles.

**Do you think people still look for Jesus in the
wrong places? Explain.**



Day 3: Matthew 28:8-10

Highlight the words “worshiped him.”

The angel told the women to “go quickly” (v. 7) to tell the disciples the news of the resurrection. In obedience, they departed “quickly from the tomb.” As the women ran from the tomb, they were filled with mixed emotions of “fear and great joy.” Fear because they had just experienced the supernatural—the earthquake, the angel, the empty tomb. But overriding their fear was an elation of great joy.

Matthew stated that “just then” Jesus appeared to them. “Greetings” was much like our “hello.” Imagine the scene. Suddenly, here is Jesus and He is saying to you, “Hello!” No wonder the immediate response of the women was to take “hold of his feet” in worship.

Jesus knew of both the fear and joy of the women. He told them, “Do not be afraid.” This was not a time for fear but joy. The joyful news of Jesus’s resurrection must be shared. That is why Jesus repeated the instructions of the angel to the women, “Go and tell” the disciples. Note, however, that Jesus made these instructions much more personal. He called His disciples “brothers.” His instruction to the disciples was that they should meet Him in Galilee. Jesus understood what His followers had gone through. His every word and move from this time forward would encourage, affirm, and prepare them for the assignment ahead.

What part of the resurrection story leads you to worship?



Day 4: Matthew 28:16-17

Highlight the two responses to Jesus in verse 17.

This appearance of Jesus in Galilee is unique to Matthew’s Gospel. For Matthew, Galilee was central in the story of Jesus. It was appropriate for Jesus to issue His “Great Commission” to take the good news into the whole world from this region of a mixed Jewish and Gentile population.

Who was Matthew speaking of when he says “they saw him”? Was this the eleven disciples only? Could this include the five hundred that Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 15:6? Many scholars lean toward the five hundred believers being present on this occasion as Jesus charged His followers to spread the gospel message throughout the world.

Two responses to Jesus’s appearance are mentioned. “They worshiped” Him, but “some doubted.” The worship of Jesus no doubt took the form of bowing before Him. Over the many months spent with Jesus and culminating with the resurrection, His followers became fully convinced Jesus was God and was worthy of worship. The word *doubted* means “to hesitate.” For some in the crowd, this may have been their first glimpse of the resurrected Christ. They may have been thinking, “Is this really Jesus?” Perhaps they weren’t sure how to act in His presence.

**Are you a worshiper or a doubter?
Explain the reason for your answer.**



Day 5: Matthew 28:18-20

Identify the singular command in these verses.

Regardless of the reason for their doubts, Jesus set them at ease when He “came near” to them. He spoke concerning His “authority.” The authority of Jesus has been central in Matthew’s Gospel (for example, see Matt. 7:29). In this commission, Jesus is giving to His followers His authority to make disciples throughout the world.

Verse 19 begins with a Greek participle that says, “As you are going.” Next came the command: “make disciples” or followers of Jesus. These disciples were to come from “all nations.” This term *nations* speaks of all people groups. From all the nations these disciples were to make followers of Jesus.

Making disciples involved two actions. First, they were to baptize them. Baptism was an outward declaration that one belonged to Jesus Christ by faith in His atoning work. Second, making disciples involved “teaching them to observe” all that Jesus taught and commanded. Bringing the nations to faith was only part of the job. They would need to be nurtured in the teachings of Jesus.

The task would not be easy. However, they would not be alone in the job. Jesus promised, “I am with you always.” The master Teacher was not abandoning them; rather, the Holy Spirit would indwell them permanently (Acts 1:8). Because of that, they were assured success.

What do these verses demand of you?

APPLY THE TEXT

While there are many proofs to the resurrection of Jesus such as the many eyewitnesses and the unexplained empty tomb, perhaps the greatest proof is the transformed lives of the disciples. Looking at your own life, is there evidence of the resurrection through the changes Jesus has made?

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