

“The Path To the Cross: Risen”
Matthew 27: 54-66; 28:1-16
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Easter Sunday, April 4, 2010

What are the implications of Jesus’ resurrection?

Jesus’ resurrection is bad news for His enemies. (Matthew 28:4, 11-15)

1. When the angel arrived and rolled back the stone, the soldiers charged with guarding the tomb were paralyzed with fear and became like dead men. Consider the irony. They were supposed to stand guard over a dead man. Now the dead man is alive and the guards are like dead men.
2. The religious leaders were similarly thrown into panic. They were forced to concoct a story that trained soldiers slept while a band of cowardly, unarmed disciples removed the body from a sealed tomb.
3. At no point do any of Jesus enemies stop and consider, “Maybe we were wrong about Jesus. He did say he was going to do this. Maybe we should all be on his side.” Why were Jesus’ enemies so hardened in their opposition? Because a risen Jesus is not good news to people who want to be their own authority. A risen Jesus is not good news to people who are comfortable in dead religion. A risen Jesus would require admitting that they were horribly wrong ... and submitting to his authority. They would rather lie to others and themselves than face the truth.

Jesus’ resurrection is cause for great joy for his disciples. (Matthew 28:8)

1. It is great joy because it means the second half of Jesus’ promise has been proven true! He has risen just as he said. That means all that he promised about his death and mission is true. He really did drink the cup of God’s wrath in our place. He really did pour out his blood so that our sins could be forgiven. His death really does make possible a new covenant—a new relationship—with God.
2. The resurrection is cause for great joy because it means that Jesus has conquered and overcome death. For those who trust in Jesus, physical death is not the final word. There will be resurrection and new life!
3. In this passage, there is an obvious affection our Lord has for the women who followed him. In a culture that demeaned women, these women were wonderfully and appropriately honored. The first woman, Eve, was the first to see the entrance of death into the world. And now these daughters of Eve are the first to see the entrance of indestructible life enter the world in the risen Jesus Christ!

Jesus' resurrection transforms our life and purpose. (Matthew 28:18-20)

1. Jesus' resurrection is proof that he has all authority—and that authority is what transforms the way we view our own life and purpose.
2. When Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me", he is saying, "I am in charge." He's saying, "it's time for you to get on board with my mission and purpose." And what is that mission? To spend our lives helping others know, love and obey him. No matter who we are or what we do for a living—our ultimate, driving purpose in life is to use our gifts and vocation and our location to join in Jesus' great mission.

Summary

1. The resurrection confronts us with the truth and the reality that Jesus has risen and that he has authority over everything. Are we living for him? Is our life oriented around his mission?
2. The resurrection confronts us with the truth that all of us will one day give an account and be judged by Jesus Christ. On that day all the enemies of Jesus will be cast out of God's presence and face eternal hell (see Acts 17:30-31). Are you ready to meet the risen Jesus?
3. If you are a follower of Jesus, Easter Sunday is a day to recommit yourself to the mission of Jesus. Don't let your own plans and desires and dreams interfere with the work he's doing in the world. See all of your gifts and resources and opportunities as belonging to him. Spend your life, your time and your energy making him known and helping others to know and obey him.

Fellowship Starters

1. Josh taught that a risen Jesus is not good news for those who want to be their own authority or are comfortable in their religiosity. Why is this true? What excuses can we make for refusing to submit and obey the authority of a risen Jesus?
2. Why is the resurrection a cause for great joy for Jesus' disciples? What about the resurrection brings *you* great joy?
3. Many people consider the prospect of death with great fear. How has Jesus' resurrection conquered the power of death and delivered us from the fear of death?
4. Josh shared that Jesus' resurrection is proof of his authority over everything. And that authority should transform our life's priority and purpose. Is your life oriented around Jesus' mission or yours? How can you spend your life, time and energy making him known and helping others to know and obey him?