

SERIES: Easter 2016

SUBJECT: "He Is Not Here..."

READING: **Mat 28:6 He is not here:** for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

Introduction:

The week began with cries of **Hosanna to the Son of David:**
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;
Hosanna in the highest. It is followed by

The Temple being cleansed by Jesus; followed by intense teaching concerning false teachers; **promising the return of Christ from heaven,** and the necessity of His followers to watch with anticipation, **the anointing of Christ in the house of Simon leper,** the institution of the Lord's supper, **the Savior's prayer in the garden of Gethsemane;** Judas' betrayal, **Peter's denial,** the mock trials, **the freeing of Barabbas,** the offer of Pilate to release Jesus, **the cry by the people Crucify him, crucify him,** the thief on the cross is saved, **Jesus cried with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:** Jesus gives up His life; **one of the guards pierces His side confirming His death;** Joseph of Arimathaea begs Pilate for the body of Jesus; **He is buried in a borrowed tomb;** the Pharisees plead with Pilate to make the tomb secure for fear the disciples would steal the body and claim He has risen from the dead; **the tomb is sealed and secured by the Roman soldiers until the third day. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. (66) So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch. Mat 27:65-66**

Today our text begins with the sun peaking over the horizon, it was the end of the Jewish Sabbath when three women according to Mark's account came to anoint the body of Jesus; **Mar 16:1-3 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. (2) And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the**

sepulchre at the rising of the sun. (3) And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

The first of them Mary Magdalene a woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons, one of several other women ministered to Jesus' physical needs as He ministered to others and taught them.

When Mary saw the empty tomb she panicked and, without seeing the angel sitting on the massive stone that had been rolled away; neither hearing his voice, **ran to tell Peter and John that the body had been stolen** **Joh 20:1-2** **The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. (2) Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.**

After telling Peter and John the body had been stolen she returned with them to sepulcher.

While Mary Magdalene was getting Peter and John the other two women discovered an Angel sitting on the stone that had rolled away as a result of a massive earthquake!

The angel knew the purpose of their visit and greeted them and his first words may have struck fear into their hearts that Mary Magdalene's assessment of the situation was correct! **He is not here!**

Throughout the centuries and to this present day there are those who would ignore the rest of the angel's statement because they believe that the empty tomb **could only be possible if the disciples had in deed stolen the body of Jesus!**

Logic and scientific consideration both play into the scenario of the world that says, **"You only go around once in life!"** What you get

in that life is all there is and when it's over it's over. You are dead, gone, and forgotten! **What would be the reality if that were true?**

I. He is not here!

a. If there is no body in the tomb, there are several possibilities why.

i. His body was never put in the tomb in the first place! This is extremely unlikely because...

1. Joseph of Arimathaea asks Pilate for the body and it is given to him by Pilate!
2. Joseph of Arimathaea, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, were sitting by the sepulcher watching as the body was placed and the stone rolled in place.
3. The Pharisees were successful in convincing Pilate to secure the grave and seal it. If Jesus' body was not there it would have made Pilate look like a fool.

ii. Secondly, the tomb was empty because Jesus was not really dead!

1. He was only rendered unconscious by the beating, the crucifixion, and having His side pierced!

2. In the cool of cave during the night Jesus revived, rolled the massive stone away without alerting the Roman guards and slipped off before dawn! **REALLY?**

iii. Thirdly; the disciples rolled the stone away without alerting the Roman guards and stole the body!

1. You mean the guards that would be executed for failure to perform their duty to keep the tomb sealed with Jesus body inside and everyone else outside.
2. And they were so confident that they took the time to neatly fold the grave clothes and lay them in the place where Jesus had laid!
3. And one of them disguising himself to look like Jesus with nail holes in his hands and feet and a spear hole in his side appearing to more than 500 of Jesus' followers without being discovered as an imposter!

b. If one of these scenarios proved to be true or some other mystical answer for the empty tomb great damage would have been done to the movement that Jesus gave His life up to birth would be all but dead without Him!

Paul the most prolific writer of the New Testament and perhaps the most recognized authority concerning the importance of the resurrection lists

the following problems if Jesus' body was not in the tomb for any of the above possibilities;

1. If Christ did not rise from the dead! **But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:** 1Co 15:13
2. If Christ did not rise from the dead! **And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.** 1Co 15:14
3. If Christ did not rise from the dead those who preach the Bible! **“..are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.** 1Co 15:15
4. If Christ did not rise from the dead the faith we profess! **“is vain”**
5. If Christ did not rise from the dead; you and me and every other person in the world would be trapped in our sin as long as we live! **Trapped in the horrible dysfunctional, debilitating, destructiveness of sin! UNABLE TO ESCAPE your sins.** 1Co 15:17
6. If Christ did not rise from the dead then **they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.** We'll never see them again! There is no hope once our loved ones die.

I have no words of comfort Linda Boulden, no hope to bring relief to Betty Lafferty; I have to tell Joan Styles that she laid her eyes on Bobby for the time Friday at 6pm! I will

never see Benjamin Cooley; I'll never be able to tell Christopher I was sorry for not coming with his grandma to see him before he died!

7. If Christ did not rise from the dead **the truest words in the Bible are these: If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men MOST MISERABLE.**

But thank God **He is not here** is NOT I say is Not the end of the angel's message; **He is not here...**

II. FOR HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

a. Never conclude God's message until He concludes it! The angel has more to say! Mat 28:7 ***And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.***

b. As they left to tell the others what the angel had said **their faith is filled with even greater hope:** ***Mat 28:9-10 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. (10) Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. (Mat 28:7)***

- i. It is now no longer angel hear say! It is truth from the very lips of Jesus;
- ii. There could be no doubt! He knew them and They knew Him!

- iii. His message is clear and plain; *Tell them they can prove My resurrection for themselves! Just **go into Galilee!***
- c. Let's now go back to the expert on the resurrection Paul! ***But now is Christ risen from the dead,*** 1Co 15:20
 - i. Put all your doubts aside in the words of Jesus

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: (18) **I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.** (Rev 1:17-18)

- ii. *And this same Christ is only first fruit!* of them that slept.
- d. **But now is Christ risen from the dead,**
 - i. Because Christ is risen from the dead; ***our preaching, and your faith has brought us to the source of all real faith.***
 - ii. Because Christ is risen from the dead we are all sure and true **witnesses of God**; through our minds, our hearts, and our experience!
 - iii. Because Christ is risen from the dead we are freed from the power of sin, have been spared the punishment of sin, and one glorious day free from the very presence of sin with Christ by our side in glory!

- iv. Sin can no longer enslave us because of the risen Christ!
- e. Because Christ is risen from the dead we fall asleep in a natural body and awake in a spiritual body!
 - i. I have wonderful words of comfort for Linda Boulden, hope for Betty Lafferty;
 - ii. I can without a moment's hesitation and without the slightest doubt tell Joan Styles that next time she lays her eyes on Bobby he'll be whole, pain free and walking with Jesus!
 - iii. I will see Benjamin Cooley for the first time in glory; I'll hear Christopher say **"its ok grandpa I knew you loved me and were sad you weren't there and I knew you'd be coming along soon!"**

Conclusion:

Because HE IS RISEN, AS HE SAID He has given me this message for you today.

Don't be deceived by the skeptics, don't be swayed from truth by those who refuse to believe the Bible.

I died for your sins just as my word says; *that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

I raised from the dead just a my word says; *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

I will one day appear in my resurrected body just as I did to those in my word; **After that, he was seen of above five**

hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

Invitation:

When you look into that empty tomb what do see?

1. Do you see a place where the greatest hoax perpetuated on mankind took place? A hoax that destroys hope, that seals comfort from the grieving, leaves mothers at the jail house doors watching their babies locked away? Dooms and damns mankind to a life of sinfulness from which they can never be freed?
2. Or do you see the grave cloths folded by the risen Christ and left there as a testimony that sin, death, and hell have been conquered that through trusting in Christ's victory for all who will believe will be saved?

Mat 28:16-17 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. (17) And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

Which group will you be a part of? Worship or Doubt?

Worship frees!

Doubt enslaves!