

"O death, where is thy sting? O Hell, where is thy victory?
 Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated!
 Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!
 Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!
 Christ is Risen, and life is liberated!
 Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead;
 for Christ having risen from the dead,
 is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep." -Chrysostom

That is from one of my favorite preachers Easter sermons over a thousand years ago. We gather this morning to recount and retell the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His resurrection is the reason for our hope. It is the reason for our faith. And it deserves to be celebrated.

For two thousand years, Christians of every tradition, every denomination, every tribe, every nation, every language, in every place have gathered together to proclaim and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And so, we will do so again this morning.

Turn with me to Matthew 27:62-28:20

I. Believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (27:62-28:6).

This is the heart of Easter.

We are not just declaring a story.

We are not just offering a narrative to the world.

We join in our voices with the heavenly chorus.

We must believe in the resurrection of Christ.

There are no half measures.

Christianity declares that Christ truly died and was truly raised.

It demands that we either accept the resurrection or reject it.

The very people who killed Christ believed he was dead.

27:62, "The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate. 63 and said, "Sit, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.'"

The religious leaders and all the powerful people in the region.

They get together after Christ has been killed.
They are discussing what should be done with Christ's body.
Because they are worried.
They know Christ promised He would return again.
He promised resurrection.
They believe that is a hoax.
They killed Christ because they thought He was a fraud.
And so they are trying to prevent false stories of resurrection.

It appears the people who killed him thought they did a good job.
They made sure that He was dead.
The Roman Empire was great at a lot of things.
It was the very best at killing its enemies.

27:64, "Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

This is their plan.
They want to make sure Christ's body stays in the grave.
They do not want His tomb to be robbed.
They do not want the body to disappear.
They do not want anyone to be able to say Jesus was alive again.

It is ironic that the disciples didn't get it.
Jesus own disciples didn't believe in the resurrection and didn't understand it when Christ would mention it.
But the Pharisees are afraid of it.
They don't believe, but they are worried.

Sometimes modern secular scholars today or atheists and skeptics will claim the whole idea of Christ's resurrection is a hoax.
It was just a scheme by his disciples.
And they believe they are genius and so intelligent for figuring this out.
As if this was not something people have thought for thousands of years.

Immediately, this is what people wondered and thought.
And the people who thought this, thought it before the resurrection had happened.
So they worked hard to keep it from happening.
They did everything possible to keep Christ's body in the tomb.

27:65, "Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers, Go, make it as secure as you can. 66 so they went and made the tombs secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard."

This is the Roman governor of the region.
This is the power and might of the Roman Empire.
They are going to make the tomb as secure as could possibly be.
They send an entire guard of soldiers.
People who will spend night and day watching over the body.
Then they will roll a massive stone over it.
Something that takes a huge group of people to move.
Something that cannot be moved sneakily by a lone thief in the night.
And they cover it with a clay.
Something like a wax that will seal it tight.
Then on top they will place a Roman Imperial seal.
The seal of the emperor will declare that this tomb is sealed shut.

The death of Christ was as secure as humanly possible.
They have his death certificate and body.
He cannot come out of the grave.
It would take an army, which would be public and not secret at all.
Unless God works His miracles.

28:1, "Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb."

On the third day.
On the dawn in the early morning of Sunday.
Two women come to see the tomb.
Not exactly the best people to move a massive stone.

Not the two most capable of defeating a Roman guard.
They just come to see Jesus and care for His body.
And this is all important because the resurrection can only be believed if
you think Christ was dead first.

28:2, "And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it."

But Christ did not stay dead.
There is a great Earthquake.
The rocks and Earth itself begins to groan.
And it groans because Christ is alive.

An angel of the Lord appears.
Not just a regular angel.
This is an angel who is a representative of Christ.
He descends from the heavens and he rolls back the stone.
And I love that he just sits on it.
This is quite the taunt.
It is almost a playful mocking of the power of Rome.
God does not need to send an army.
He just sends one angel.

28:3, "His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow,"

And his appearance is brilliant.
He appears out of no where.
And his clothes are far whiter than they should be.
In a world where everything is dirty.
Nothing could stay white and clean back then.
This angel is.
Because he is not from this world.

28:4, **"And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men."**

And the soldiers are filled with fear.

They are trembling and shocked.

Because the power of God is not something they can fight.

And now they are the ones who appear to be dead.

28:5, **"But the angel said to the woman, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified."**

And the angel speaks to the women.

I love that he does not even address the soldiers.

They are scared and terrified.

But the angel ignores them.

Instead, he addresses the women who loved Christ who came seeking Him.

And he tells them that they do not have to be afraid.

The soldiers might still need to be afraid.

But the women do not.

Because they are seeking the crucified Christ.

The Christ who died for us.

The Christ whose body was laying in this tomb.

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

The angel proclaims the resurrection.

Christ is not dead.

He is not in the tomb.

He has risen.

He has been raised from the dead.

He has done exactly what He said he would do.

He could not be stopped by Rome, or rocks, or any man.

He could not be stopped by death or the grave.

He is alive.

And the women are invited to come and see the tomb.
To touch his burial clothes.
To see the place where His body once was.
They can investigate for themselves.

The women along with the soldiers are the witnesses to the resurrection.
They have seen the Christ's body was in the tomb.
They watched him placed there and rolled the stone themselves.
And now they can see he is gone.
His body has not been stolen.
An angel appeared.
An earthquake happened.
And now the Son of Man is alive.

This is the message of Easter.
This is the message of every single Sunday.
We worship a Savior who is alive.
One who defeated death and lives.

If you are a Christian, if you are a believer.
This story is not optional.
This is not something we can choose to believe or not.
This is the very foundation of our faith.
This is essential to our faith.
This is what Christians have believed since that very first Sunday morning.
We believe the Jesus Christ was crucified, dead, and buried, but then was resurrected.
We believe He came back to life in victory.
We have to believe this.
We must hold on to this.
Nothing else in our faith is worth a thing if Christ is not raised.

And if you are not a Christian.

If you are just here for one reason or another, but you don't know what other think about Jesus or the Bible.

You must think deeply about the resurrection.

You don't need to worry about anything else until you grapple with this fact.

Christ has been raised from the dead.

This is the entrance into the kingdom of God.

His resurrection is our only hope for salvation.

His death and resurrection is the good news.

There is hope after death, not because heaven exists.

There is hope because Christ has defeated and disarmed death.

All those who believe in Him will be resurrected.

And Jesus conquered death not to show off His might.

He died and was resurrected in our place.

He did it to defeat sin.

He did it to rescue us from the chains of slavery.

He came back in order to set us free.

But the only way you will have salvation and freedom is if you put your faith in Christ.

Believe in His resurrection.

II. Tell people of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (28:7-15).

If we believe in the resurrection, we must tell of it.

This is something the angel says over and over again.

WE are not just to believe in the resurrection.

We must proclaim the good news of the resurrection.

We have to tell people about it.

28:7, "Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."

This is what the angel says right away.

The women are to go and tell.
To proclaim the resurrection of Christ.
First they are to go to the disciples.
Because they don't know yet.
They are stuck in despair.
And they need to hear the good news of Jesus.
And they need to hear the fact of Christ's resurrection.
He was dead, but is now alive.

And there is a promise that if they go obey,
If they head to tell people of the resurrection,
Then they will see Jesus.
Because those who go will see Jesus.
They are to imitate the angel in his telling.
As they have been told of the resurrection, they go tell others.

28:8, "So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples."

So they obey quickly.
And I love that it tells us that they did it with fear and joy.
They were excited and they wanted to tell people about Jesus.
But there's still was fear.
They didn't know how they would react. They didn't know if they would be believed.
They may even be part of them that wonders if it's true or if they're imagining it.
Guess what faith and doubt aren't opposites a lot of the times they're mixed together.
And yet they still run to obey.

28:9, "And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him."

We get this wonderful moment
Because they have been obedient, they get to see Jesus.

And he begins by just telling them, "greetings."
I have to imagine that Jesus said it was some playfulness and joy.
And so as they see Jesus, they fall and worship him.
They worship at the feet of the one who was pierced.

28:10, "Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me."

And again they were told to not fear.
The resurrection of Jesus has not bad news. It is good news.
It is the best kind of news.
Because Jesus has been risen, we never have to fear ever again.
There's nothing to fear in this life when the life to come if you believe in Jesus.
And Jesus again, tell them that they need to go tell.
Not just to tell the disciples of Jesus has risen, but that they can see him.
If they go to Galilee.

There's this little theme here.
We have to believe in an act of obedience.
That we believe the resurrection, and we tell the resurrection.
And in that step of obedience, that step of faith, even in the middle of fear and doubt, Jesus, meet us there.
Jesus did not just appeared to the women first they had to first go, and then they saw him.
And similar to us if we go, Jesus will meet us.
We have to take the step of faith.

28:11, "While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place."

This is not the only story.
The women that disciples are being commissioned to proclaim the gospel.
They're being told to tell people of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Put there was another group of people.
There's another story.

The guard's first go and inform the chief priest and the leaders.
And they are telling them Jesus is alive and angel came.

28:12, "And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers 13, and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"

This group has been told the story and they refused to believe it.
Even here again after the last greatest miracle of Jesus, they refused to believe.

And so they start to tell another story.

They tell the soldiers lies.

They tell them to lie and say the disciples stole Jesus because we're all bad at our jobs.

28:14 "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and

The elders tell the soldiers that will make sure you don't get in trouble.
If the governor finds out will make it okay.
They will cover for them to provide some story.

28:15, "So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day."

And so the soldiers choose money over Jesus.

They're too worried about the cost of telling the truth.

And so they go and tell their truth.

And from the day, Jesus, it was raised their two stories that are told.

And I think it's on purpose of the Scriptures repeat this word of telling.
All throughout this passage it repeats.

The angel tells them to tell.

Jesus tells them to tell.

And the high priests tell them to tell.

The question is, which story will we believe?

In which story will we tell?

There is no middle ground.

There is no way to reconcile these two together.

We was either believe to Jesus and raised from the dead or that he has not, and it is a lie.

Those are the two stories.

And all of us will tell a story.

Because we have to believe, we can't have no opinion.

If you think you have no opinion, that means you don't believe it.

So will we tell the story of the world?

We tell people that is a myth and a lie created to deceive or for money or power?

And you can tell that story and it's actually very profitable.

The soldiers made lots of money telling that story and they're still ways today. Satan and demons in the world will reward you for repeating its lie.

Or we can tell the story of the Resurrection.

We can tell people that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

If you believe that Jesus has been raised from the dead, we need to tell.

We cannot just keep this news to ourselves.

We cannot keep it from our children.

We must tell them and teach them that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

We must tell those that we love.

We must tell those that we work with.

We tell those that we see and all that we know that Jesus is alive.

Today's a great day to do that.

This is a great season to do it because everybody is thinking about Easter and thinking about Jesus.

It's a natural time you just ask those in your life. What do you think about Easter? Do you think Jesus really came back?

And you could really listen to what they say and then you can tell them I think it's true.

Let me tell you why.

And let me tell you why it's great news.

We should look at pray for who we can tell of the good news of Christ.

Pray that God would put someone in your path.

Pray he would give you the opportunity.

And even if you are filled with doubt and fear, if you got, the resurrected Christ will meet you there.

III. Make disciples of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (28:16-20).

We believe the resurrection, we tell of the resurrection, and we are to make disciples of the resurrection.

It is not just something we believe.

It is not just something we talk about.

We become followers of the resurrected Jesus.

28:16, "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them."

We see the disciples obey.

They heard the testimony of the women.

And they come to Galilee to see Jesus.

They obey and do what He asked.

28:17, "And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted."

They see him and worship.

Again we notice obedience and worship is mixed with doubt.

Even though they see Christ in front of their own eyes, they doubt.

Jesus does not cast them out.

He does not get rid of them.

They are not lesser disciples just because they struggle.

Being a disciple of Jesus means you will sometimes doubt.

28:18, "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

This is the beginning of the great commission.

They are given a mission from Christ.

The risen Jesus has received everything.

He has all the authority and power over heaven and earth.

And He has a mission for those who would be His disciples.

28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

This is the mission.

It is not just to go and tell.

Disciples of Christ are to make other disciples.

Not to create converts or customers.

Not to build a brand or a following.

But to make disciples.

This means people who want to become disciples and followers of Jesus.

Being a Christian means being a disciple.

It means wanting to follow Jesus and model your entire life around Him.

It means letting Jesus change you.

A disciple of Christ lives like Christ.

Their entire life is about Jesus.

They don't just go to church sometimes and do some vaguely Christian things.

They let their entire lives be transformed by Christ.

And we are to make disciples of all nations and peoples.

The resurrection destroys barriers.

It makes us all citizens of a better kingdom.

It makes us want to go and worship with people who would be our enemies in the flesh.

And we are to baptize them.

We don't just make disciples and converts then leave them alone.

We are to baptize them in the name of the Trinity.
Baptism is the marker of entrance into the body of Christ.
It is something new believers do.
And it is symbolic of becoming a Christian.
Of being one of us.
And we baptize people because we want them to be buried and raised with Christ.

28:20, "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

We then also teach them.
To make a disciple is to teach them what it means to follow Jesus.
We teach them to do what the Bible says.
We teach them to follow the teachings of Christ.
To follow what we are supposed to do.
Being a Christian means we are freed from sin.
But it doesn't mean we can do whatever we want.
We have to follow Jesus.
And to make disciples we have to teach people what that looks like.
We have to show them what it means to follow Jesus.
This is the practical side of discipleship.

My question for you is, are you making disciples?
If you are following Jesus that is wonderful!
I am so glad that you are a disciple.
But are you discipling others?
Are you looking for opportunities to disciple others?

The Christian life is not just about us.
It is not just about your life.
Jesus did not come back to life just so you could be your best self.
Or so that you alone could become incredibly holy and spiritual.
He came back to make disciples from all peoples and nations.
And He has invited us to help.

The only qualification you need to make disciples is to be a disciple.
This is not just something for the apostles or pastors.
It is not something you need to go to seminary for.
But you do need to know Christ.
And then you help other people know Him.
We need to make disciples of the resurrection of Jesus.
To teach others what it means.
And to help Jesus change their lives as well.

Then it ends with a beautiful promise.
Jesus will always be with us.
He will be close till the end of the age.
Because He is risen and alive.
And He is always present.
Because Jesus is alive.
He is resurrected and has defeated death.
It can no longer touch Him.
So, He can always be close by.

We need to believe the resurrection, tell the resurrection, and make
disciples of the resurrection.
The resurrection of Christ changes everything.
It is the climax of history.
It is what everything is about.
And it is the best very news.
He is risen.