



## A New Day How the resurrection shook the

### 1. Understanding of the cross

### 2. Understanding of Jesus

### 3. Witness's own story

### 4. Meaning for us

## Resurrection Stories A New Day

### Read

- **Matthew 28.1-10**

### Intro

We often approach Easter with a series based upon the cross and then mention the resurrection in one sermon at the end. But we are always then risking playing down the essential importance of the resurrection as a central tenet of our faith. We are going to try to unpack it's amazing truth through looking at four witness encounters with the risen Jesus described in scripture and look at what this means for us.

The resurrection is the key and pivotal point in history. It's the trigger for everything. We see in Matthew 28.2 that there is a great earthquake – and the resurrection is a moment of a great earthquake in history – the tremors of which we see in every person who comes to Christ.

### 1. How the resurrection shook the witnesses understanding of the cross

#### Put ourselves in their shoes

- It is extremely helpful to put ourselves into the shoes of the women in our account – we need to understand where they are at on the morning they awoke.
- We can try to get into their minds and consider what they understood of the cross – we have a very joyful acceptance of the cross- we wear crosses around our necks. The cross is a sign of hope. We sing and express gratitude for it.

#### The cross was an object of horror and terror for them

- But for these women the cross was not anything but an object of brutal torture.
- It was repugnant, abhorrent to them – it represented the lowest point in their lives.
- They had seen their Lord and Master being beaten, bloodied and broken on the cross – a torturous memory they wanted to erase from their mind.
- The cross was not a place they would ever want to go back to – it was a reminder of Rome's rule and oppression and the death of their hope of Jesus being the Messiah.
- They had witnessed everything Jesus endured on the cross – prevailing to the end where they watched from a distance
- The cross broke them and filled them with a deep and hopeless sorrow.



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#### **They were going early morning to visit a corpse**

- They set out early morning to visit a corpse with no idea how they would roll back the stone – it was a dutiful but hopeless mission
- Their minds wracked with pain
- We see that they encounter an angel who said to them 'do not be afraid .. He has risen' – imagine their reaction. We are so used to the story that we cannot begin to comprehend the women's reaction to this momentous event which feels them with both fear and joy.
- They must have been overjoyed – in a moment their understanding of the cross is transformed. If Jesus is alive then this must mean that the cross means something different to what they feared.
- Crucified but risen! they perhaps begin to understand that the cross is ultimately a place of victory.
- It is no longer a place of sorrow and crushing defeat – it is a place of joy. Caesar is not King it is Jesus who rules and reigns even triumphing over death. Their perception of Jesus is totally transformed not by the cross but by the resurrection.

#### **2. How the resurrection shook the witnesses understanding of Jesus**

##### **What did they understand about Jesus as they set off that morning?**

- We notice that the women are the first to rise early and go to the tomb to anoint Jesus even though they have no idea of how they will move the stone from the tomb
- In the accounts of Mary Magdalene, we have the sense of the women sitting staring at the tomb and the stone bewildered and collapsed in sorrow
- How long did they sit there just staring through tearful eyes?
- They must have been so confused – Jesus had made so many hints of His Messiahship so what did this tomb mean for those who had put their trust in Him? Was he wrong?
- They are searching for a lifeless battered corpse but what they are confronted with is an angel declaring that He is Risen and that they should remember His words – which they had surely forgotten in the midst of their pain.
- If this is true then everything else that he said is true too – the resurrection substantiates everything



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## 3. How the resurrection shook their stories

### **We need our own encounter with the resurrected Jesus**

- We need not just to get inspired by the story we need to have a deep personal encounter with the risen Jesus in our own lives
- The women had met the angels, remembered what Jesus had said, were filled with fresh joy and hope and went to run and tell the disciples.
- When they met Jesus face to face – they were stopped in their tracks by the presence of Jesus who said 'Greetings' in the same way we would say 'Hi'

### **Jesus could have revealed himself to the Emperor himself – but he chose instead these devoted women**

- We need not just to get inspired by the story we need to have a deep personal encounter with the risen Jesus in our own lives
- He wanted to reveal himself to these devoted women because He loved them.
- He could have chosen to reveal himself to the Emperor, or the temple authorities – but instead he chose to encounter first these unreliable witnesses. Why?
- The implications of His choice have cosmic consequences and deeply personal impact.

### **Jesus has changed us in the same way**

- In John 20.11-16 we see in the encounter with Mary Magdalene that she is so desperate to find Jesus that her search is not put off even by the presence of angels. Jesus calls her by name and her whole story changes in a moment.
- This is our testimony – Jesus has changed us. Jesus doesn't want any of us to weep anymore.
- I love the way in V9 he says Greetings – its like he is saying 'Hi guys how you doing?' it communicates a certain 'what else did you expect?' attitude.
- They took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. They have travelled from despair to joy – and then worship this very morning they encountered the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Out of this comes the church and the fulfillment of Jesus commands or us to make disciples and love one another



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## 4. How does this impact us?

### Remove the stones in our own lives

- I have been so impacted by the picture of the women waiting and staring at the stone covering the tomb.
- God is still rolling stones away in our own lives
- One of the applications for us is to ask for the resurrection power to roll away the stones in our own lives
- What is the one thing in your life you spend time like the women staring at hopelessly?
- What are the impassable blockages or objects of sorrow in your own life? Illness, anxiety, depression, financial worry, lack of self-worth or anything else?
- He is the God who transforms the story – He moves the stone.
- Let's respond to that invitation to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the stones and allow the resurrection power of Jesus Christ to move them away.