

JESUS' RESURRECTION

Matthew 28:1-20

Key verse 28:6

"He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay."

Thanks be to the Lord for richly blessing our study of Hebrews. Through it we were allowed to know the superiority of Jesus, who through the obedience of faith gave his own blood as an atoning sacrifice, thus opening the new and living way into the sanctuary and establishing an everlasting covenant with us. Now we may always look up to Jesus, the beginner and perfecter of our faith, and run our race of faith with patience to the end, to the glorious crown of victory.

Today let us study the joyful Easter message. The tomb is empty - Jesus is risen. Today we learn the fact of the resurrection. We no longer need to remain trapped under the power of death, but may begin a new, victorious and overcoming life through resurrection faith. We also learn that the work of making disciples is the heart and counsel of God whereby He desires to win all nations. Let us accept the fact of Jesus' resurrection and obey Jesus' Great Commission through resurrection faith, and change all nations into Jesus' disciples.

I. The Empty Tomb (1-15)

Let's look at verse 1: "After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb." In chapter 27, we learn that Jesus was sentenced to death the day before the Sabbath and then cruelly crucified on a wooden cross. Finally, Jesus died and was buried. But now was the first day of the week when he would rise again according to his promise. The last verses of chapter 27 tell us that the chief priests did everything they could to prevent Jesus' resurrection. So they put extra guards and sealed the huge stone that had been rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb. But despite all their efforts, they could not prevent Jesus from being raised by the

power of God and rising from the dead on the third day.

That morning was the first day of the new age. But the women's thoughts were still caught up in the power of death, as when dark storm clouds darken the earth and we do not even realize that above the clouds the sun has long since shone brightly. The women came to the tomb that morning in great sorrow, but also in faithfulness. They had experienced Jesus' grace personally. They had endured to the end under Jesus' cross and had also been present at his burial. They loved Jesus dearly and came again that morning to check on the tomb.

But something extraordinary happened that morning. Let us read verses 2 and 3: "There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow." The angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled away the stone and sat on top of it. It was the revelation of God's omnipotence that opened the view to the most important message in the history of the world: the tomb is empty. Jesus has risen from the dead. He has completely conquered the power of sin and death and given us a new and blessed life according to His promise. The heavy stone that was like the immovable power of the world was simply rolled aside. The angel appeared in great power like lightning and in purity with white clothes. We see in him the resurrection power of Jesus, which completely destroyed the death power that until now crushed the souls of men. A tomb is usually a place of silence and mourning. But the resurrection power of Jesus shook the tomb of Jesus very violently and it became a place of exuberant joy and new life. Acts 2:24 testifies, "But God raised him from the

dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

Verse 4 says, "The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men." The guards were to prevent Jesus' resurrection. But even the armed and well-trained Roman soldiers became like sissies before Jesus' resurrection power and became as if they were dead.

Let us read verses 5 and 6: "The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." The angel understood the heartache and sadness of the women. They had witnessed the cruel crucifixion of Jesus, how he was mistreated, disfigured, humiliated and died covered in blood in great pain. This image could not simply be erased from their minds. But in the midst of their grief and despair, they needed to hear the good news: "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said."

Let's read verse 6 together again, "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." This verse is the declaration of victory over the power of death. It is the glorious good news that Jesus did not remain in the tomb under the power of death. No, Jesus has risen from the dead. He has defeated the power of death. From now on, death has lost its power and terror. The door to eternal life has been thrown wide open.

Since Genesis chapter 3, all people lived under the power of death: "For dust you are and to dust you will return." There was no escape from this power of death, despite all the attempts of human beings. All had to capitulate to the power of death. The pharaohs had huge pyramids built, but they had to die and now their mummies lie in the museum. Alexander the Great conquered a huge empire, which reached to the Nile and to the Indus. But he could not escape the power of death and died at the age of 32. But our Lord Jesus, who gave his life in obedience to God's will as a ransom sacrifice for our sins, did not remain in the grave, but was raised by the power of God and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. His tomb is empty and testifies to the victory over the power of death for all time. We now no longer live a helpless life under the power of

death. Rather, as God's children, we may share in the power of the resurrection and live a new and victorious life. Christianity is the work of the resurrection which is established on the empty tomb. Christianity is the work of life and hope.

I know a young man who was placed in a special school by the experts. But his parents overcame all the disbelief and criticism of the experts and regarded him with resurrection faith so that he could attend a regular high school. Thus, he did not become a special student, but today is a diligent student at the university and testifies to the resurrection power of Jesus.

Hudson Taylor went to the interior of China as a pioneer missionary in the late 19th century to preach the gospel. He was confronted with sickness and death in his family. But through resurrection faith, he moved on and fulfilled God's mission. We can still see the fruits of his ministry in Chinese Christians today, who held on to their faith in Jesus even in the time of the Cultural Revolution.

Now the angel wanted to set up the women as witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. That is why he invited them to visit the empty tomb: "Come and see the place where he lay." The empty tomb is the proof of the resurrection. They had seen Jesus laid there. The tomb had been closed and sealed. But the body of Jesus was no longer there.

Why did God choose the women in particular to witness the resurrection? It was because they loved Jesus the most. They were faithful and came back to the tomb that morning. That is why God chose them. The resurrection message works most vividly in people who love Jesus with all their hearts and want to live or die with him. The resurrection message moves their hearts, refreshes their minds, and fills them with new strength and vision.

Sometimes on the way of discipleship we get into a valley of despair or bitterness. Although we love Jesus, sometimes we reach a hopeless dead end. But we need not despair. The message of the resurrection gives us the strength and power, like a great earthquake. We may hear his message in person: "He is not here. He has risen." To those who live selfishly and are busy all day with their own affairs and earthly things, the resurrection message seems like a sleeping pill. But to those who love Jesus, the resurrection

message comes with great power that changes their lives 180°.

Let us read verse 7: "Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." Now the women were sent to the disciples as resurrection witnesses. The good news was not to stop with them. The disciples also needed to be delivered from their fear and anxiety. We are also to proclaim the message of the resurrection to people who are still in the shadow and darkness of death, or who are desperate and helpless because of the power of death.

Let's look at verse 8: "So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples." When they heard the message of the resurrection, they were filled with joy and fear. On the way to the tomb they had hardly been able to walk. But now they were full of strength and ran to proclaim it to the disciples.

Let us read verses 9 and 10: "Suddenly Jesus met them. 'Greetings,' he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'" As they were on their way, the risen Jesus met them in person. When they believed and obeyed the angel's command, they were allowed to meet the risen Jesus in person. They fell down before him and clasped his feet. The resurrected Jesus gave them the same message again, as did the angel: "Do not be afraid! Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." The encounter with the risen Jesus made them even more certain that they could testify powerfully to the resurrection of Jesus. This message is for all who love Jesus, and he even calls them his brothers.

The first Christians experienced much rejection and persecution as strangers in this world. But they were not sad or despondent. Through faith in the resurrection of Jesus, they lived a victorious life, even giving their lives courageously as martyrs for Jesus.

The resurrection power of Jesus worked in the life of Dr. Samuel Lee. Because of the early death of his mother, his youth had been marked by fatalism. But the encounter with the resurrected Jesus based on Ephesians 2:10 brought about a great change in his life. He was able to understand himself as a work of God for good

works. Through resurrection faith, he was able to help many Korean students overcome their fatalism and rather obey Jesus' world mission command through resurrection faith and be sent out as missionaries for world mission to more than 90 countries.

Through resurrection faith, M. Dr. Peter Chang was able to overcome the prevailing humanism and unbelief in the hearts of German students and victoriously serve the disciple-making work. Through this, God has raised up completely hopeless students to be the responsible shepherds and global leaders for His world mission work. Although Satan is often envious and wants to discourage us, we may be built by faith as a spiritual headquarter for the world mission work. Because Jesus rose from the dead, I need not remain passive as a spectator, but may boldly challenge the pioneering work and even the M mission.

Verses 11 through 15 tell of the chief priests' desperate attempt to suppress Jesus' resurrection. They had already tried to prevent the resurrection through the guards, but had failed. Now they were doing everything they could to eliminate the message of the resurrection. They were very satanic. They gave a lot of bribes and caused the guards to spread a lie that they were asleep and that the disciples had stolen the body. However, it is nothing more than Satan's desperate attempt to suppress the resurrection power. Unfortunately, this lie became a talk that many people used to justify their disbelief in the resurrection of Jesus until today.

Jesus did rise from the dead. The empty tomb is the best proof of this. The resurrection changes and strengthens us to live as witnesses of Jesus. The resurrection message empowers Sarah and Peter to take the baccalaureate for the glory of God. The resurrection message establishes each of us as a witness of Jesus to the students that we may bring about spiritual revival in Germany and Europe through our one-to-one Bible study and disciple-making. Through resurrection faith, we may conquer the 1700 campuses in Europe and raise 10.000 Bible teachers.

II. Jesus' Great Commission (16-20)

Let's look at verses 16 and 17. "Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." In accordance with Jesus' command, the disciples

went into Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. There they met the Lord personally. They fell down before him in worship. They recognized that he is indeed the Lord of life and death, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Verse 17b says, "...but some doubted." Even in some disciples there was still doubt, even though they saw Jesus. This shows that resurrection faith does not come from seeing, but from believing.

Let us read verse 18: "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Jesus is the sovereign Lord over heaven and earth, over life and death, over visible and invisible things. He is also the Lord of the history of the world. Eph. 1:20, 21 say, "He exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come." At present we are experiencing various unforeseen events, such as the pandemic caused by a small virus or the Ukraine war. Despite all the terrible news, we may know that Jesus has all power in heaven and on earth. He holds all things in his hand and everything must serve his honor and glory, as Isaiah 6:3 testifies: "The whole earth is full of his glory."

The disciples were weak, but because Jesus possesses omnipotence, they were allowed to go into all the world as the witnesses of Jesus and be used as witnesses of the resurrection. What can we do against the false teachings and against the powers of this world? Jesus is the almighty Lord who works in the hearts of the sheep. His word makes even dead bones alive so that they can rise as an exceedingly great army of God.

What then does Jesus' command consist of? Let us read verses 19 and 20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Here we find a fourfold command of Jesus: go, make disciples, baptize, and teach.

First, Jesus commands us to go. As long as we remain sitting on our couch of laziness or lying in the bed of unbelief, nothing is guaranteed to happen. Through resurrection faith, we may leave

our comfortable environment, take up the spiritual battle of invitation ministry, one-to-one Bible study and M-mission. Then God works very powerfully to every faculty and college, even for the spiritual revival in Europe.

Second, Jesus' command is to make all nations disciples of Jesus. Jesus is not satisfied with making people nominal believers who click "Like" once or show up at church once on Sunday. He is interested in changed lives. Jesus wants to raise up students through us as His disciples, as those who follow Jesus, who align their lives with Jesus' words, and in turn do God's work in their generation and environment.

Third, "Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (19b) Baptism signifies a life decision with repentance and conversion to Jesus. For the first Christians, baptism meant a decision to consecrate their lives as martyrs for Jesus. In other words, we are to lead people to a binding life decision for Jesus. God worked mightily in the hearts of our 5 baptized so that they could make a decision with 1 Peter 4:13: "Rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ."

Fourth, teach them to keep all things. Baptism is not the end, but it is the beginning of the new life. Therefore, we are to teach the sheep all that Jesus commanded us. We are to help them to obey the word of Jesus and to live their lives according to it. That is why Apostle Paul said that God had sent him to establish the obedience of faith among all Gentiles.

Jesus' focus are the disciples who obey the Word of God in their practical lives, that is, who live a changed life. Therefore, disciple making through one-to-one Bible study is the way to obey Jesus' Great Commission. Disciple making is not an invention of UBF. It is the command and heart of Jesus to make disciples of all nations. Let's obey Jesus' command by raising disciples of Jesus at all 1700 campuses in Europe and also in the M-world.

Finally, Jesus said in verse 20b, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Jesus is always with those who obey his Great Commission. In him we have absolute security. Humanly speaking, living with the mission of God seems to be an uncertain life, but in fact we have the best assurance, for Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the world.

Through today's lesson, we have come to know the good news of the resurrection. Jesus has defeated the power of sin and the power of death once and for all, and has opened for us the new and living way into the Kingdom of God. Jesus' resurrection power drives away all thoughts of death and makes us strong and alive to serve His work in this generation. He has set us up as living witnesses of His resurrection power by obeying Jesus' Great Commission, which is to make disciples of Jesus of all nations. Let us overcome all limitations and calculation through resurrection faith and obey Jesus' world mission command by influentially serving the work of disciple making through one-to-one Bible study and bringing about spiritual revival.