

Matthew 28:1-15 (tx:5-8)

## EASTER'S GLORIOUS MESSAGE

- I. It is proclaimed to a human audience
- II. It is preached by God
- III. It pronounces a wonderful truth

## INTRODUCTION

A Muslim once approached a Christian & said:

- “We, Muslims, have 1 thing you Christians don't have. When we go to Medina we find a coffin & know Muhammad lived because his body is in that coffin. But when you go to Jerusalem, you find nothing but an empty grave.”
- “Thank you,” the Christian replied. “What you say is true & that makes an infinite difference. We, Christians, have an empty grave because we have a risen Lord!”

Indeed, that's what makes Christianity so utterly unique & so different from any other religion in the world.

- for our Leader isn't dead & in a grave.
- if that were the case, then the cross was a tragic end; sin & death aren't defeated.
  - we are still in sin & destined to an eternity without God.

But Easter followed Good Friday.

- the crucified, dead, & buried Jesus arose from the dead & is now alive.
  - His grave is empty.
- th'fore He is our risen, living Lord who has power to save us, helpless sinners, from sin & death.
  - & to give us everlasting life.

Well, we consider on this Sunday after Easter its GLORIOUS MESSAGE that God preached through His angel recorded in Matt.28.

- &, as we look at that 1<sup>st</sup> Easter sermon, we see several truths about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- 1<sup>st</sup>, that it is a joyous message proclaimed to mankind, 2<sup>nd</sup>, it is preached by God.
- &, 3<sup>rd</sup>, it pronounces a wonder truth.

## I. IT IS PROCLAIMED TO MANKIND

Now, Matt.28 says: “After the Sabbath, at the dawn on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, [certain women] went to look at tomb [where Jesus had been buried].”

- you see, Calvary was past; Jesus was dead & buried; the crowds had gone home; the 11 disciples were in hiding; Jesus' enemies were licking their chops thinking they had won.

- The Trouble Maker from Nazareth was dead; his body was sealed in the tomb & guarded by soldiers to prevent any foul play.
- & the women, who had followed Jesus, watched from distance on Golgotha & at grave,-
- 
- they then returned home completely crushed, never expecting to see Jesus alive again.
- so they went home to prepare spices to anoint Jesus' body as soon as the Sabbath was over.

Then 3 days after **Good Friday**, according to Jewish calculation, on **Sunday**, early in the morning, those women came to see the tomb.

- they wanted to pay their last respects to Jesus, worried about how to remove that huge, heavy stone at the entrance.
- (OVER)
- but that was already taken care of, for Matthew says God suddenly went into action & caused a violent earthquake to occur.
  - that was Scriptures' way of indicating the presence of Lord's saving power.

Now, that earthquake occurred because God sent His messenger from heaven, an angel, to take stone away.

- with divine might & majesty he laid stone aside, & then sat on it.
  - all symbols of God's power & victory.
- & that angel was sent to do that, not to allow Jesus to get out.
  - for the grave was already empty; He had risen before the angel came.
  - Jesus needed no open door because all He had to do was to simply & silently leave with His resurrected body right through the walls of that sealed, well-guarded tomb.
- so no one actually saw or recorded the exact moment of Jesus' resurrection.
  - records just give us the evidences that it really did happen.
- & the angel came then to open tomb for all to see it was empty.
  - & to see the evidence that it was: the undisturbed burial clothes.

Th'fore, no matter what Satan & human beings did to Jesus on **Good Friday**.

- the leaders & soldiers may have killed Him & seen Him die.
  - friends may have buried Him in a borrowed grave.
  - enemies may have taken all the precautions they could to seal & guard Jesus' grave.
- & in doing all that humans were saying in affect: “Jesus is dead, & His body lies in this grave. No one can take it out. No power can change what we have done.”

Yet all their attempts were utterly foolish & futile, for when all the facts are gathered from the **4 Gospels**, what do we find?

- in Joseph's garden, God laughed, an earthquake occurred, an angel appeared, the guards quaked & ran in fear, the seal was broken.
  - & on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the grave, where Jesus was buried, was empty.
- all the efforts of human beings were in vain, for nothing could hold Jesus Christ, the mighty Conqueror, when He tore death's bars away & arose.
  - He is not in the tomb, but now on the throne of the universe.
  - Jesus isn't in a casket, but He lives beyond death & the grave in glory as the risen, ruling, living Lord of all.
- & even those who had guarded the grave were used by God to testify to the truth Jesus arose when they ran into the city & told what happened.

Well then, **Matt.28** states some women came to Jesus' tomb, saw stone removed, & encountered an angel of the Lord with divine glory sitting on the stone.

- & you can imagine, they were frightened out of their wits until they heard that 1<sup>st</sup> piece of good news: "Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. You have come looking for a dead body, but I want to tell you He is not here; He has risen, just as He said."
- those women then were the 1<sup>st</sup> audience to hear Easter's joyous message of Christ's resurrection.

And it was only fitting they were the 1<sup>st</sup> ones to hear God's **Easter** sermon.

- to be sure, they should have believed Jesus' words that the cross & the grave weren't going to be the end for Him.
  - & we may criticize them for their lack of faith.
- yet we shouldn't overlook their exceptional love & loyalty to Jesus.
  - they were there at Calvary, in Joseph's garden, & now at the grave to see if all were in order & to pay their last respects.

It was because of that God gave them the honor to be the 1<sup>st</sup> one to receive the wonderful message Jesus had arisen & is alive again.

- & to have the privilege to proclaim that good news to the hiding disciples.
- also it is those women's privilege, through their witness in Bible, that Easter's message of salvation & eternal life is now proclaimed to the world.
  - to you & me too.

That's how God rewards love & loyalty to Him.

- it is when we believe & profess, practice & proclaim His Word of salvation & life to the world,--
- then we will receive Easter's joy & eternal life.
  - experience Christ's resurrected, living presence & power.
  - & have the opportunity to share that with others.

II IT IS PREACHED BY GOD

Now **Matt.28** also tells us **EASTER'S GLORIOUS MESSAGE** was **PREACHED BY GOD.**

- by an angel sent from Him.
- it means then, in a real sense, when God sent His angel to be a special spokesman of His Word of salvation, it is He Himself who proclaims it.

Well, this wasn't the 1<sup>st</sup> time an angel came from Lord to proclaim & interpret His saving acts in history.

- remember: angels appeared to announce the birth of the Savior at Christmas.
- there was an angel at Jesus' ascension to tell the disciples to stop standing around & get to work because Jesus is coming back.

And then, when Christ arose, an angel from God also came to be at the empty tomb.

- to be there to chase away the guards, take away stone to expose the empty grave.
  - to guard the evidence of the resurrection, for now it was a different tomb that needed different guards.
  - now it was a place of triumph over sin & death so that it needed a guard from God, His angel.
- & an angel was there to minister to the needs & faith of those who came.
  - to bring the divine message & explain the meaning of the empty tomb.
  - to make sure there is no doubt or mistake about it.
  - Jesus isn't dead; He arose; He is alive!

Note well then: we learn from all that that God's Word, **Bible**, is the only source & grounds for knowing & believing the good news of **Good Friday & Easter** to gain salvation & eternal life.

- for the gospel of salvation through the cross & the empty grave doesn't come to us by some special, supernatural, spectacular revelation or vision or a direct line to Lord.
  - no, but faith comes by hearing God's Word, just like those women heard & believed Easter's saving message by hearing God's Word through His angel.
- so today, too, God still proclaims Easter's joyous message to us through the Scriptures.
  - & we must believe & obey it to receive the blessings of Christ's resurrection--salvation & eternal life with Lord now & forever.

### III. IT PRONOUNCES A WONDERFUL TRUTH

But now, what **A TRUTH** the angel **PRONOUNCES** to those woman that 1<sup>st</sup> **Easter Sunday!**

(OVER)

- a message of salvation, of victory, & of joy, & of real life that has echoed down through the ages: "Jesus Christ is risen! He is alive!"
- & notice: there are 3 points to angel's Easter sermon.

The 1<sup>st</sup> point is: “Don't be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.”

- what those words are really saying to those women shaking in fear is this: “You have already started to be afraid, but stop! Stop trembling! Stop being afraid! The soldiers are the ones who should be afraid because they are enemies of our Lord, but you are His faithful friends who love Him & want to honor Him with your final burial rites.
- “Good intentions, but that's useless now. So stop being afraid!”

And the reason they didn't have to be afraid, & that's the 2<sup>nd</sup> point of angel's **Easter** sermon, is because he had good news to bring them.

- real good news: Jesus' grave hadn't been violated & His body stolen.
- instead, Jesus is not there because He is risen!
  - He, with whom they had walked & talked, whom they saw die & was buried,--
    - whose lifeless, cold body they now wanted to anoint,--
    - that same Jesus is gone; He is alive; the tomb is now empty!

And to further help women overcome their fright & strengthen their faith in the truth of Jesus' resurrection, the angel adds a gentle rebuke: “Just as He said.”

- that is to say, the angel reminded them Jesus had said again & again He had to suffer & die, but He always added He would rise again.
- th'fore the goal of Jesus' life & work wasn't just to die on Calvary's cross.
  - but His death for our salvation was to be part of a greater climax.
  - it was to be concluded & complemented with His resurrection from dead 3 days after Golgatha.

And so, no matter what people did to Jesus to destroy Him.

- or how hard they tried to get rid of His words & works.
  - the fact remains: we believe, without a doubt, He arose from dead, just as He said He would.
- & because He said it, it was inevitable death couldn't & didn't hold Him, for He had to rise from the grave & live again for our salvation & eternal life with God.
  - that's what He had committed His whole life & work to.

And, too, what Jesus said about His resurrection happening is further confirmed by the preaching of His followers found in **Bible**.

- so then, the fact Jesus arose from the grave is proof positive His Word, that had been once given, to His disciples that is so mysterious & unbelievable, is absolutely true.
  - th'fore we see again how His word is the grounds of our faith in believing the truth of His resurrection for our salvation.
- & we can also believe, because Jesus arose as He said & as even OT. Scriptures prophesied, He then is the only Savior from sin & death & the Source of everlasting life.

Then too, to further assure the women even more Jesus had truly risen & is alive, the angel invited them to “come & see the place where he lay.”

- to take a good look at the clear & certain evidence His resurrection is a real fact of history.
  - not just the fact His grave is empty, but the place where His body had lain & how His burial clothes & head piece still lay undisturbed, in good order, & in its original place & shape.
  - proof Jesus had passed right out of them in a mighty manner.
- & so all that gives witness to the fact no one had been there & pillaged grave & stole Jesus' body,
  - but He had triumphantly been restored from death to life.
  - & He had miraculously stepped out of His burial clothes & left the grave gloriously alive.

That's glorious truth of the angel's **Easter** message to the women, & to us too.

- Jesus is no longer in the grave, but He is alive!
- all the founders of those other world-religions have graves with their remains in them.
- but the grave of Jesus, whom all agree was a real, historical person,--
  - His grave is empty today, proving He now lives to save.

And yet many today deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- they do, even though the evidence of the empty grave is too great to deny it.
- th'fore the problem for those who deny Jesus arose is to explain the empty grave, which they do with all kinds of fanciful explanations.
  - explanations that don't make sense to an intelligent person.

There is then only 1 explanation: God's Word through His angel at the empty grave.

- also through the words of those who actually saw the evidence & the risen Lord Himself.
  - & through their testimony found in Bible.
- they all say: Jesus isn't in the grave because He is risen & lives.

And so the greatest news that is sent by God through His angel is this:

- “Stop being afraid. Jesus isn't dead! He is alive!”
- & O, how we need that good news, don't we?
  - for, as Oswald Chambers wrote: “Our entire social order rests on fear. The 1<sup>st</sup> civilization was founded by Cain, murderer, & whole basis of a civilized life ever since has been a vast, complicated, gilded-over system of murder & fear. Look how we live. We are prisoners in our own homes. We are afraid in our homes & in our cars. We are afraid of someone or something. Afraid of failure; afraid of dying & scared to death of living.”

But the angel or God Himself has good news for the women & us: “Jesus Christ isn't in the grave.

- “He is risen, for death couldn't control or overwhelm Him!”

- indeed, that angel at the tomb 1<sup>st</sup> announced to women that death, the wages of sin that came through an act of a woman in Paradise, has now been overcome by Jesus Christ for all who believe in Him.

Th'fore we don't have to fear life or death anymore.

- Jesus Christ has paid the full price of our sin once & for all.
- He has finished the task of bringing life & victory over death.
  - for He was crucified, endured hell, died, was buried.
  - but He arose from the dead to live again, & now He reigns over all.

“And because He lives, truth lives; hope endures; love triumphs; virtue is justified; integrity is legitimate.

- “Because Jesus lives righteousness is imputed & sanctification imparted to those who come to Jesus [in repentance & faith].
- “Because Jesus lives, holiness is real; salvation has arrived; grace is all-sufficient; & mercy is invincible.
- “Because Jesus lives, the oppressed will be liberated; justice will be adjudicated; & judgment will be definite.
- “Because Jesus lives, we do not have to grieve like those without hope.
- “Because Jesus lives, we live.” (OVER)

We then have genuine, abundant, unending, indestructible life & joy & peace, comfort & courage to go on in life, & for eternity too.

- for in Him, our living Lord, we are raised from the death of sin.
  - we are forgiven & accepted by God to live forever with Him.
- & in Him, our resurrected Savior, we are raised to a new life of holiness.
  - no longer do we need to greedily grab for this world's material goods & thrills, for tomorrow we die & that's all there is.

Never, but, because Jesus lives, we live victoriously in any & all of life's troubles & tears & tough going.

- because Jesus lives we can be sure “[He or] our God will go before us in times of trouble, in sickness & health, in joy & sorrow, in marriage [&] iron out the rough edges when no other help can be found. He will go before us with our children & level out mountains of rebellion.
- & He will go before us at work & straighten out crooked paths. He will go before us to exalt the valleys of disappointments & chase away shadows of death.”

And because Jesus arose from the grave & lives we too don't have to fear death & the grave as the end of everything for us.

- but we believe & know for sure the grave is just a passage into a better life with God.
- & we know we will rise to live in eternal glory with Him.

## CONCLUSION

You see then, as someone pointed out:

- “In this world of fear, of sorrow, of death, the greatest discovery for humanity was not when we learned to harness the power of electricity or when we split the atom or even when we created the Pentium chip. The greatest discovery was when few women went to anoint the dead body of a Man & discovered the empty tomb of our living Lord.”
- the greatest good news then is Easter's joyous message:
  - “The crucified, dead, buried Jesus isn't in the grave anymore. It is empty. He has risen! He is alive! Look at all evidence!
  - “So don't afraid! Believe in Him! Love & serve Him! And live!

And, by the way, the angel's 3<sup>rd</sup> point in his **Easter** sermon, is the command to the women, & to us too: **Go and Tell!**

- that we must never just sit in our pews & yearly celebrate what Good Friday & Easter are all about.
- but we must get out of our comfort zone & go out into all world—to our neighbors, our friends, to all kinds of people everywhere.
  - & proclaim & show them Easter's good news: “Jesus lives! Believe in Him & live!”

AMEN