



Temple Baptist Church
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“Come and See; Go and Tell!”
Matthew 28:1-10

They weren't coming to see if He had risen—even though He had said He would.

No, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary,” as Matthew identifies them, were coming “to see the tomb” (28:1).¹

Mark and Luke both tell us in their accounts of the Gospel that Mary and Mary were coming to make sure that Jesus had been given a proper and decent burial. He'd been taken down from the cross so quickly just before the beginning of the Sabbath that Friday evening that they were afraid He hadn't.

Assuring a proper burial

They knew that Joseph of Arimathea had asked Pilate for His body and had buried it “in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock” (Matthew 27:60). But they didn't know whether he'd had time to prepare the body properly by anointing it with fragrant oils and sprinkling spices on it to mask the stench when it began to decay.

After all, that's what they were expecting. None of the twelve disciples had been at the cross when He was being crucified (except maybe John—John 19:26-27 says that the “the disciple whom He loved,” whom we assume to be John, was there). Judas had betrayed Jesus to the Jewish leaders and the others had all deserted Him. But Matthew tells us that many women had followed Jesus from Galilee to minister to Him, and that *they* were there. They were watching from a distance, but they were there. “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary” were among them (Matthew 27:55-56).

And they had watched Him *die*.

These women had not only watched Jesus die on the cross—one of the cruelest deaths anyone could die in the ancient or modern world—but these two Marys had followed Joseph after he had taken Jesus' body down from the cross. They had watched him wrap His body in new linen he had bought for this purpose, but so far as they could tell, he hadn't anointed the body. And when Joseph buried Jesus, these two women were there “sitting opposite the tomb,” watching (Matthew 27:57-61).

Interesting, isn't it? One man named Joseph had lovingly carried Jesus in his arms when He was a little child. He had taken Him and His mother Mary to safety in Egypt, then back to Judea and into Galilee in the land of Israel after Herod the Great, who had tried to destroy the child, had died (Matthew 2:13-23). Now another Joseph had lovingly laid His battered body to rest after the Roman governor had ordered His crucifixion at the behest of the Jewish authorities (Matthew 27:57-61).

The next day, the Jewish leaders had requested that Pilate post a guard at the tomb until after the third day, since they had heard Jesus say that He would rise again. After all, they reasoned, His disciples could steal His body out of the tomb and say He had risen, which from their perspective, would only make matters worse (Matthew 27:62-64).

So Pilate had granted their request and assigned a guard consisting of several soldiers to have custody of the tomb until after the third day, when Jesus' body would have begun to decompose and it would be absolutely certain that He was not coming back to life. To make things official and to raise tampering with the tomb to the level of a crime against Rome, they had also put the official seal on the stone (Matthew 27:65-66).

Experiencing a life-changing reality

And so the women had come. And what they found was the last thing in the world that they had expected!

About the time they got to the tomb, there was a great earthquake. An angel of the Lord, whose appearance was as bright as lightning and his clothes as white as snow, came down from heaven and rolled the stone back from the entrance and sat on top of it.

As you can imagine, the guards were so terrified when they saw him that they quaked in their shoes (Matthew uses the verb form of the word for *earthquake* to describe how they were shaking). And then these brawny, fearless soldiers fainted dead away!

The women were terrified, too. But the angel spoke to them and said, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said" (28:5-6).

And then he invited them—"Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (28:6).

Can you imagine what it must have been like for them? Can you imagine on that morning, the third day after they had seen Him firsthand die on the cross, hearing the angel say, "He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay"?

But the angel didn't stop there. He went on to tell them, "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him" (28:7).

And away they went! They left the tomb with a strange mingling of fear and great joy, and ran to tell His disciples the news. And while they were going, all of a sudden, Jesus met them on the road and greeted them. They bowed down before Him, clasping His feet and *worshipping* Him.

And then *He* told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (28:10).

Coming and going

"*Come and see Go and tell*" When the women experienced the reality of Jesus' resurrection, they *had* to tell others about it!

This reality of His resurrection had gripped them so deeply that they couldn't *not* tell others! They had seen that He was no longer in the tomb. But it wasn't just the empty tomb that convinced them.

After all, the empty tomb could be explained in any number of ways. Matthew goes on to tell us that the Jewish leaders paid off those Roman soldiers to tell the story that they fell asleep, and while they slept Jesus' disciples came and stole His body so they could claim He had risen

(Matthew 28:11-15).

But it was so obviously an *angel of the Lord* from heaven who invited them to *come and see* where Jesus' body had been lying. And that convinced them. They ran to tell His disciples.

And as if the angel's declaration wasn't enough, they actually met the risen Jesus Himself on the road, and He told them to *go and tell* His disciples.

In the English language, we have several different kinds of verb moods. Among these is the *indicative* mood where the verb states a fact or a perception. We also have the *imperative* mood, which states a command. The Greek language also has the indicative and imperative.

In this text, we have both. The angel stated the indicative, the fact: "He is not here, for He is risen, as He said." And then he stated the imperative: "Come and see Go and tell" And the imperative arose directly out of the indicative! Because Jesus had risen, and they were experiencing the reality of His resurrection, they were commanded to go and tell others.

And so are we!

Like those women, *once we experience this awesome reality of Jesus' resurrection, we're commanded and compelled to tell others about Him!* How can we not? This is *good news* that everyone needs to hear! Jesus who was crucified *is risen from the dead!* And because He is, we can have eternal life and the forgiveness of our sins!

Experiencing and telling

Maybe the problem is that this incredible reality has never really gripped us deep down in our hearts.

In Acts 3-4, Peter and John had healed a lame man. As a result, the Jewish officials had taken them into custody because the people were listening to them teach and preach about Jesus—whom they had turned over to the Romans to crucify just a few months earlier.

After taking counsel among themselves, the authorities commanded Peter and John not to teach or preach in Jesus' name anymore. Peter and John's reply was one of persons who've been gripped by the reality of what they've experienced: "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

And when the reality that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead has really, really gripped our hearts, neither can we!

I mean, think about the *magnitude* of it. *Jesus rose from the dead!* Dead people just don't get up and walk around and live! But Jesus did! He rose never to die again. And He did it so we might have eternal life with Him! How can we *not* tell others about Him? As Paul described it in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." In other words, with His resurrection, the age of resurrection, the new creation, has begun! It hasn't come in its fullness yet—that will happen when Jesus returns in glory to raise the dead, judge the world in righteousness, and set all things right in new heavens and a new earth, as God fulfills His eternal purpose "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Ephesians 1:10, NIV).

Maybe you've never experienced this reality at all. Maybe you've never trusted Jesus as your Lord. Oh, you've always heard the story, and in your mind you believe Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. But it's never gotten from your mind to your heart in such a way that you've put your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and surrendered your life to Him.

That's how it was with the soldiers and with the Jewish leaders. They had secured the tomb and set a guard because Jesus had said He'd rise again. The soldiers fainted dead away when

they saw the angel, and they and the Jewish leaders knew Jesus was no longer there, and that no one had stolen His body away. They knew something supernatural had happened. Yet in the face of all the evidence, the Jewish officials paid off the Romans soldiers to tell a concocted story about a body-snatching.

Are you like them? Have you heard it and seen the evidence that Jesus lives in the lives of people who know Him, and yet you've never put your trust in Him? What better time could there be to trust Him than on this day when we especially celebrate His resurrection?

Because by His death on the cross He gave His life as “a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28), shedding His blood “for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28), and then God the Father vindicated Him by raising Him from the dead, *anyone* can be saved and follow Jesus as their Lord. No matter who they are or what they've done, whether rich or poor, Jew or Gentile or whatever race or ethnicity—*anyone* who trusts in Jesus will be forgiven, redeemed, and made a part of God's family as they yield their lives to Him as Lord to follow Him. He is the equal opportunity Savior and Lord!

It's simply a matter of recognizing our need, confessing and turning from our sin to Jesus Christ, placing our trust in Him based on who He is and what He has done, and giving our lives up to Him as our Lord.

And Christian, what better day for His resurrection to become more real to you and make more of a difference in your and my life and witness than today as we experience God's resurrection power at work in us?

You see, when we experience—really experience—the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it's a life-changing, transforming, revolutionizing experience that nothing else can rival. When we taste of the hope of resurrection, knowing that we will one day be raised too, we're never the same.

And so, my brothers and sisters, *come and see!* Jesus Christ is risen; He is risen indeed!
How can we not *go and tell?*

†MEG

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version.