

GOD WITH US

Part 8: JESUS

Message 24 – SON of GOD: The Resurrection of Jesus

Introduction

The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Paul wrote that if Christ did not truly rise from the dead (as some suggested then and even now), then our faith “is in vain” (1Corinthians 15:12-19; esp.v.17). He further argued that the resurrection of Jesus was the most important evidence proving that Jesus was the Son of God (Romans 1:4). He told a skeptical group of Athenian philosophers that God had “furnished proof to all men by raising Jesus from the dead” (Acts 17:31). There is nothing more important than the resurrection of Jesus. It validated everything He said concerning Himself. It served as the Father’s stamp of approval on Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross for sins. And, Jesus’ resurrection is the guarantee that we also can someday have eternal life.

The resurrection accounts are actually quite short, focusing more on the confusion that engulfed the disciples when the tomb was found empty. ***In particular, the role of women as the first witnesses is highlighted.*** (Shirley has co-written this summary with additional comments as an addendum with observations on the role of the women in the life of Jesus.)

The Women Arrive at the Tomb:

Matt.28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1

A group of women came to the tomb early on Sunday morning, intending to finish the burial process with spices and ointment (Luke 23:56 and Mark 16:1). Mary Magdalene figures most prominently in all the gospel accounts; but with her were Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Salome (Mark 16:1) and “*other women with them*” (Luke 24:10). One the way, they wondered who would roll away the heavy stone from the opening of the tomb (Mark 16:3); but when they arrived, they found that it had already been rolled away by an angel (Matt.28:2-4). The angel’s appearance had caused an earthquake, causing the Roman guards to be paralyzed with fear at the sight of him (Matt.28:4).

The women went into the tomb, but instead of finding the body of Jesus they were met by two angels dressed in bright white robes (Luke 24:4,5). One of them told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:5). He reminded them of Jesus' previous words concerning His death and resurrection.

“Why are you seeking the Living One among the dead? He is not here; He is risen! Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ Then, they remembered His words” (Luke 24:5-8).

This is an interesting addition that the angels wanted the women to remember, referring to the times in Galilee that Jesus predicted His death, burial and resurrection. The first of these predictions happened immediately after Peter had declared that Jesus was the Son of God (Matt.16:20,21). The women were obviously there to hear Jesus' predictions.

The women were astonished, running back to the place where the disciples were gathered to tell them what they had seen and heard (Matt.28:8).

“But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense” (Luke 24:11).

This must have been humiliating for the women who told the disciples exactly what they had seen and heard, which was all true.

Peter and John go to the Tomb: John 20:3-10

Peter and John ran to the tomb to see what had happened and check out the validity of the women's story (John 20:3-10). Upon arriving, Peter went in first, followed by John. It is interesting to note the details that John includes concerning what they found inside the tomb:

“He (Peter) saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple (John), who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed” (John 20:6-8).

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene: John 20:11-18

Mary Magdalene was a key follower of Jesus, among many unique

women. In Luke ch.8:1-3 we read:

“Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, (the manager of Herod’s household); Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.”

Mary had been healed of 7 demons. Now, she was given the privilege of being the first key witness to the risen Lord! After Peter and John had left, Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping, at a loss to know where Jesus’ body had been taken. Suddenly, Jesus appeared to her:

He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking He was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to My brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God’” (John 20:15-17).

Mary then returned to the disciples and reported that she had seen the Lord. (Note: According to Matthew 28:9,10 Jesus also appeared to Mary Magdalene along with some other women, as they were on their way from the tomb to report to the disciples.)

Addendum: Additional Comments from Shirley

The life of Jesus has taught me so many things; but one of the most significant is how much Jesus values me as a woman. It is a privilege to be a woman when seen from God’s heart.

The gospels, especially Luke and John, highlight Jesus’ love for women: healing women, forgiving and protecting women, talking with women and blessing their children. He humbly welcomed women as His disciples – and received care from them for Himself and His 12 male disciples.

The female disciples of Jesus were not from one social class. They were from across the spectrum. A woman healed from 7 demons

serving right next to a woman from the royal household! Jesus absolutely leveled the playing field as to them and us being equal in value.

Why do the gospel writers emphasize the role of women? Because Jesus was radical in the way He treated women. In the 1st century, women were not allowed to be educated or to be witnesses in courts of law. Yet, Jesus chose women, and Mary Magdalene in particular, to be the first witnesses to His resurrection. This was the highest honor He could give to anyone, and He gave it to women.

On the day of Jesus' crucifixion, all 4 gospels tell how the women courageously stayed at the scene of Jesus crucifixion, watching Him suffer through 6 excruciating hours until He died, not retreating in fear.

They watched as Jesus was taken down from the cross and wrapped in grave cloths and 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes. (Myrrh was one of the 3 gifts the wise men brought for Jesus at His birth. It was used for its intended purpose at His death – to anoint Him for burial.)

“The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how His body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes ...” (Luke 23:55,56).

How interesting. Evidently, the women wanted to make sure that they would add their *additional* spices after the Sabbath was over.

The women who went to the tomb on Easter morning were:

“Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body” (Mark 16:1-3, Luke 24:10).

Note: The above scripture references “*Mary, the mother of James*” as the 2nd name. There are differing opinions as to who ‘this Mary’ was. Some take her to be ‘the actual mother of Jesus’, who went on to have a family with Joseph whose names are listed in Mark 6:3 – “*Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph (or Joses), Judas and Simon? Aren't His sisters with us?*” The challenge with this view is that there are later references to Mary, the mother of Jesus, where she is identified as His mother, rather

than referring to her being the mother of the other children she birthed. For Eg. Acts 1:14 – *“They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”*

John’s resurrection account is unique, because he focused primarily on the experience that Mary Magdalene had when she followed Peter and John back to the tomb.

Jesus speaking her name, **“Mary”** is significant. Jesus’ voice was all it took. She recognized His voice and fell to her knees to worship Him. What a moment! Jesus put His love for Mary on display for all eternity. We get to read about this moment 2,000 years later. This is to encourage us all, but especially women! We matter to God! He knows us by name and invites us to know Him intimately, so that we can recognize His voice as Mary did.

Jesus took the most unlikely person, healed her of seven demons, and brought her into His inner circle of disciples. He gave her the privilege of being the first witness to His resurrection.

As women we are made in the image of the Godhead (Genesis 1:27) and share His sacrificial devotion and courage, at risk to ourselves. Men do too, but I am encouraged that women had a such a significant role to play in the life, death and burial of Jesus, which the Holy Spirit through the gospel writers wanted highlighted.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your precious love for all humanity, but especially Your unique and personal love for women. Thank You for receiving our feminine hearts, created in Your image, to bring You glory, and us great joy. May we, like these gospel women, be bold to follow You without fear, and bring You great joy as they did. Amen!