

He Has Risen, as He Said!

Mat 28:1-10 (text: Mt 28:6)

4 April 2021, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 am

Resurrection Sunday

(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

My agnostic friend looks at this Bible passage and says, “It’s all fairy tales!” “Jesus did not rise from the dead!” “Jesus is not who He claimed to be!”

Well, I know that you & I are different to my friend – we are *not* agnostics!

So, my brother & sister, let every agnostic thought vanish from your mind & heart! Just take God on His word! I’m not saying that Christians should be dumb or gullible, neither that they should have no discernment. All, I’m saying is: Let’s not try to be self-wise or arrogant or puffed-up before God, thinking, “O, I know it all”!

Remember what our Lord once said about the puffed-up, arrogant, know-it-all learned Pharisees & Scribes (Lk 10:21): “***I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.***”

I pray that you & I will have & display implicit (childlike) trust in the Triune God and His Word!

So, I repeat what I have said so often, i.e., that here in our text, we have in front of us the true & unadulterated Word of God, given to us by the Holy Spirit who inspired Matthew to write these words.

And the words of the angel (v.6) are the main message of our text for you and me: “***He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.***”

So, we want to expound this message by way of the following three points...

He Has Risen

As He Said

Come See!

He Has Risen

On that first Sunday after His crucifixion, Jesus Christ, the Son of God rose from the dead!

Someone might ask, “But what is the significance of His resurrection? Well, in short, that all things our Lord claimed *to be*, and all things He *taught*, and all things He *did* are now powerfully confirmed!

But not just *that* – no, everything He promised still to do in the *future*, is now surely to be trusted, for all of it *firmly rests on His resurrection from the dead!*

And indeed, all of what we have just said would have been the whole impact Mary and the other women would have felt there in the garden (and gradually in the days after)!

Now they were able to see that He had indeed authority to lay down His life & take it up again.¹

Now they could see that every desire of God’s Old-Testament saints – yes, every yearning they had for life after death – will be fulfilled; yes...

- that the prayer of Job will indeed be fulfilled – that prayer which he so ardently prayed, “***I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; ²⁷I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!***” (Jb 19:25-27).
- Yes, these women would have understood that also the prayer of King David is now fulfilled when he said, “... ***you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay***” (Ps 16:10).
- and the prayer of the Sons of Korah as they prophesied, “***But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself***” (Ps 49:15).
- and so, too, the prophecy which Isaiah uttered amidst war & devastation: “***But your dead (O land of Judah) will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust (i.e., you dead), wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead***” (Is 26:19).

¹ cf. Jn 10:17-18

Yes, Mary & the other women would be overwhelmed by the realisation that all God's Old-Covenant saints will now live forever!

What else would have dawned on Mary and the rest?

Well, that everything Christ taught about the future is now sure to happen:

- That there will surely be a future judgement!²
- That every believer can be sure of their own resurrection.³
- Yes, that the words Christ once spoke to Martha, have now found strength, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.*"⁴

My brother & sister, this holds also true for you & me insofar as we have indeed received Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord!

Well, so far point 1: "He Has Risen."

Here is point 2...

As He Said

My brother & sister, the angel told the women, "*He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.*"

Someone might say, "Pastor, but did Christ really foretell both His *death* and His *resurrection*?" "If so, where and when?"

Well, right through His three-year ministry, Jesus often talked about His death⁵ in an indirect/veiled way – even about His *resurrection*.⁶

² cf. Christ's teaching in Mt 25:31-46;

Also cf. Acts 10:42 *And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead;*

Acts 17:31 "...because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

Also 2 Tim. 4:8 *Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

³ cf. 1 Thess 4:13-18

⁴ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 1996, c1984, S. Jn 11:25

⁵ Cf. Mt 9:15 *And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast..."*

⁶ Cf. Mt 12:39-40 *But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

Also Mt 16:4 *An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed.*

However, in the months before His death, Jesus spoke *openly* and *directly* about His resurrection. And He did this at least three times!

Yes, do you remember the time when Jesus & His disciples were at Caesarea Philippi – way up north in Galilee? He had just heard Peter’s profession of faith in Him. Then, what do we read (in Mk 8:31f.)?⁷ ***And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.***

See? Mark tells us that Jesus *said this plainly* (Mk 8:32); in fact, so plainly that *Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him* (Mk 8:32). Well, just over a week later, after Jesus had been transfigured on a mountain,⁸ we read (Mk 9:30-31), *They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.”*

Then, finally, as Jesus was walking in front of His disciples and a crowd – yes, as Jesus was leading the way from Galilee down to Jerusalem, determined to go to His death, and (very astonished and afraid) they all were following Him,⁹ we read (in Mk 10:32b-34), ***Again, he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”***

See? No less than *three times* did Jesus tell them, in advance, that He would rise on the third day after His death!

And, although He mostly told the *disciples only* – and in secret – it seems they then told other people in the crowd.

How do we know that?

Well, because even Jesus’ *enemies* – the high priests and Pharisees – knew that Jesus had foretold His resurrection (Did Judas tell them?).

⁷ Cf. Mt 16:21f. for the parallel

⁸ However, already when Jesus and Peter, John and James were coming down the Mt of Transfiguration, we read in Mk 9:9, ***As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.***

⁹ Cf. Mk 10:32 ***They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid.***

You see, on the Saturday morning (i.e., the day after Jesus was crucified), what did the high priests & Pharisees do? They went to Pontius Pilate and said (Mt 27:63), “*Sir, we remember that while He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So, give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day...*”¹⁰

My brother & sister, see? Before our Lord’s death, it was well known that He had said (that) He would rise again after three days!

And so, the angel of our text (v.6) says it well when he says, “...*He has risen, as he said...*”

Well, what do these angelic words imply?

Don’t they in a kind way – yet for all practical purposes – say, “Come on, ladies!” “You knew about His resurrection even before He died!”? “Remember, He told you so!”

How wonderful the words, “...as He said!”

But what else do these wonderful words mean to/for him/her who has an ear to ear what God says?

Well, don’t these words instil faithfulness and trust!?

“... *as He said!*”

And don’t they confirm that Christ’s death was planned by God – yes, that God was not caught by surprise when they killed His Son!?

Christ *said so* beforehand! He knew all about it! In fact, from eternity past God had decreed it so!

Well, that was point 2: “...as He said!”

Here is the last point...

Come See!

Our passage tells us that an angel had removed the stone from the entrance.

Why did he have to do that?

¹⁰ Cf. Mt 27:62-64, *The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.* ⁶³ “*Sir,*” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘*After three days I will rise again.*’” ⁶⁴ *So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.*”

Surely not to allow our Lord to come out!?

After all, Christ's new (glorified) resurrected body could walk through closed doors – as He later on that same day (and again a week later) showed when He appeared to the disciples while they were together in a room behind locked doors.¹¹

So, no! The angel opened the tomb to enable the women¹² and also Peter & John¹³ to enter and *come see* & experience the resurrection first-hand for themselves!

And, you know what? As these women entered the tomb, they experienced Christ's resurrection with more than just their eyes!

Indeed, when the angel says, "Come *see*," it's more like "Come *perceive*!" "Yes, take in with all your senses!"

So? What *did* the women perceive!?

Well, the same as Peter & John would see a few minutes later.

You see, the Bible tells us (Jn 20:6-7) that Peter & John saw the linen cloths which had been around Jesus body – and the head-cloth which was neatly folded up.

Now, some Christians¹⁴ have come to the conclusion that those linen cloths were still in the shape of a body – yes, almost like a cocoon that's left behind when the moth/butterfly has crept out of it!

However, even the original language does not allow for such a conclusion! (But it does not exclude it either). Yet, the text/context does give the impression that the linen strips were not lying in disarray!¹⁵

Thus, as one commentator says, we don't have to try and embellish what the disciples saw in the tomb, because the evidence was already wonderful enough! The linen strips were lying there by themselves – without the body! That's wonderful enough, for it was not the custom of grave robbers to unwrap a body which they wanted to steal!¹⁶

¹¹ cf. Jn 20:19, 26

¹² Mk 16:5 tells of their entering the tomb! *As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.* Also Lk 24:3

¹³ Jn 20:6-8

¹⁴ Wiersbe, Warren W.: *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Mt 28:1

¹⁵ v. 5b & 6b both say, "he looks at (he saw) the strips of linen lying there" .. βλέπει κείμενα τὰ ὀθόνια, and θεωρεῖ τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα being the prs pass/dep ptc neut pl acc of κέῖμαι lying, recline, be in a place, exist.

¹⁶ I agree with Hendriksen that, without trying to embellish what the disciples saw in the tomb, the evidence was already wonderful enough! The linen strips were lying there by themselves – without the body! That's

Thus, there's only one conclusion possible, i.e., that Christ Himself left that tomb alive leaving His grave clothes behind!

Well, the women of our text, who came before Peter & John, saw the same picture with their own *eyes* – i.e., with the sense of *seeing*! But they also *heard* the voice of the angel(s), which was in itself another way of getting confirmation from heaven that their Lord did rise!

But there's more involved! You see, before, as the women were still coming to the tomb, there was a great earthquake, a powerful sign which said as much as: "Listen, the Lord is speaking!"¹⁷

Thus, these women saw, heard and felt the resurrection!

But look, only few minutes later, as they ran out to go tell the disciples, these women also *touched* the resurrection! I mean, does not v.9 tell us how they *took hold of Jesus' feet*...!?

See? These women perceived His resurrection also by their sense of *touching* – touching Jesus' feet (v.9)!¹⁸

"...Come see!" "Come see *with all your senses*!"

My brother & sister, so clear was this multi-senses "seeing" of the risen Lord, that about sixty years later, as the Apostle John, in old age, remembered this day and the following forty days after the resurrection, He described those senses (1 Jn 1:1-3) *What was "from the beginning, what we have ^bheard, what we have ^cseen with our eyes, what we ^dhave looked at and ^etouched with our hands, concerning the ^fWord of Life.... what we*

wonderful enough! Cf. by HENDRIKSEN, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to John (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Books. p.450).

¹⁷ Most appropriate wording by which Hendriksen covers the positive and negative messages portrayed by earthquakes! Cf. by HENDRIKSEN, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to Matthew (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Books. p.988).

For the significance of earthquakes in Bible times, cf. also Ex 19:18; Nm 16:31; 1 Ki 19:11; Jb 9:6; Ps 18:7; 68:8; 77:18; Is 2:19; 5:25; 13:13; 24:18; 29:6; Jer 10:10; 49:21; Jl 2:10; Na 1:5; Ha 2:6; Rv 6:12; 8:5; 11:13-19.

¹⁸ Mt 28:9 *And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.*

^a John 1:1f; 1 John 2:13, 14

^b Acts 4:20; 1 John 1:3

^c John 19:35; 2 Pet 1:16; 1 John 1:2

^d John 1:14; 1 John 4:14

^e Luke 24:39; John 20:27

^f John 1:1, 4

have ^aseen and ^bheard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our ^cfellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.¹⁹

How great those senses that have experienced Jesus!

Wouldn't it be lovely if you & I could see Him with our own eyes?! But we should remember what our Lord told Thomas, “*(Thomas) because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*”²⁰

My brother & sister, Christ has risen, as He said! Come see! Come “see” as you read/hear His Spirit-enhanced Word! And if you see, may you then do what the women of our text did – worship Him (v.9)!

Yet, don't forget the last command of the angel (v.7) and of Jesus (v.10): “*Go tell!*”

And may you & I sing with all our heart...

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow;
because He lives, all fear is gone;
because I know, He holds the future,
and life is worth the living, just because he lives.²¹*

AMEN (2,220 words excluding footnotes)

^a John 19:35; 2 Pet 1:16; 1 John 1:1

^b Acts 4:20; 1 John 1:1

^c John 17:3, 21; 1 Cor 1:9

¹⁹ *New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update*. LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1995, S. 1 Jn 1:1-3

²⁰ *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 1996, c1984, S. Jn 20:29

²¹ Refrain of “God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus...” (Sing to the Lord 458)